

8 Sweden drops Assange rape investigation after 10 years



11 In desert dunes, electro fans rave about Tunisia tourism



24 Besieged by protesters, Lebanon assembly postpones key session



28 Harden, Westbrook shine as Rockets extend win streak



# Amir urges new prime minister to crack down on corruption

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled sworn in • MPs call for strong Cabinet, reforms



KUWAIT: Newly-appointed Prime Minister HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah is received by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Dar Salwa yesterday. — KUNA

By B Izzak and KUNA

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah praised newly-appointed Prime Minister HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah yesterday and urged him to crack down on corruption. “We have given you responsibility...a big responsibility...fight corruption and the corrupt... inshallah. My Allah the Almighty help you for the best interests of the nation and people,” the Amir told the premier after he was sworn in at Dar Salwa. The prime minister thanked HH the Amir for his trust in assigning him this post. “I pledge to you to do all I can to continue the blessed march under the leadership of Your Highness,” he said.

HH the Amir had earlier yesterday appointed long-serving foreign minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled as the new prime minister and asked him to form the next Cabinet. An Amiri order was also issued to allocate the title of His Highness to the newly-assigned PM. HH Sheikh Sabah’s

appointment came a day after former prime minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah declined to form the new Cabinet, saying he intended to clear his name from graft allegations.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled is expected to start consultations to pick his ministerial team immediately. The new premier is the third PM in the country since 2006, when HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was appointed prime minister but resigned over five years later following protests. The Cabinet resigned a week ago after MPs filed no-confidence motions against two ministers following lengthy grillings over allegations of mismanagement.

The resignation was followed by a rare clash between the former defense and interior ministers over allegations of graft. The two ministers were later removed by the Amir. There is no time-frame for the new prime minister to announce his Cabinet, which will be the eighth since late 2011.

Continued on Page 24



HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled takes the oath of office as prime minister yesterday. — KUNA

## Taleban release two hostages in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR: The Taleban handed two Western hostages over to US forces in southern Afghanistan yesterday, three years after they were abducted, in a successful swap for three high-ranking insurgent prisoners that could boost peace talks. The exchange of American Kevin King and Australian Timothy Weeks for the militants - including Anas Haqqani, brother to the Taleban’s deputy leader - was

termed a “confidence-building” measure by both the Australian government and the insurgents.

“We are profoundly pleased and relieved”, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said in a statement, adding that Weeks’ family had asked the government to convey their relief and gratitude. King and Weeks, both professors at the American University in Kabul, were kidnapped by gunmen wearing military uniforms in the heart of Afghan capital in Aug 2016. They later appeared looking haggard in a Taleban hostage video, with the insurgents going on to say that King was in poor health.

The two professors were driven by car to Nawbahar district in Zabul, a

Continued on Page 24

## Jleeb ‘cleanup’ in full swing

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The committee entrusted to handle the situation in Jleeb conducted a second inspection tour of the area and reported thousands of violations. Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi said a campaign was launched yesterday in the area earlier than planned so that the team comprising of elements from various relevant government bodies could probe the difficulties.

“The team closed 120 stores, disconnected electricity to 43 buildings, removed 10,000 tons of construction waste material and garbage, removed 223 commercial shades, arrested 120 street vendors pending deportation and destroyed two tons of foul foodstuff,” he explained.

Continued on Page 24



KUWAIT: A bulldozer tears down the signboard of a shop during a crackdown in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh yesterday. (See Page 5)

## Mum knows best: Homemade soup may fight malaria

PARIS: Some soups may be good for more than just the soul. A new study suggests that certain homemade broths - made from chicken, beef or even just vegetables - might have properties that can help fight malaria. Researcher Jake Baum of Imperial College London asked children from diverse cultural backgrounds at state-funded Eden Primary School to bring in homemade clear soup broth from recipes that had been passed down across generations to treat fever.

The samples were filtered and incubated with cultures of Plasmodium falciparum, a parasite that accounts for an estimated 99.7 percent of malaria cases in Africa, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Of 56 soup samples tested, five were more than 50 percent effective in curbing growth of the parasite, two with similar success as one drug currently used to treat malaria, Baum and his team reported Tuesday in the Archives of Disease in Childhood.

Four other soups were more than 50 percent effective at blocking parasites from maturing to be able to infect mosquitoes, which transmit the disease. “When we started getting soups that worked - in the lab under very restricted conditions, I should add - we were really happy and excited,” Baum told AFP in an email. But he noted that it was unclear which ingredients had the antimalarial properties. “If we were serious about going back and finding the magic ingredient, like good scientists, we’d have to do it in a very standardized way,” he said.

The soups came from families from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, and had a variety of base

Continued on Page 24

## US slammed for backing settlements

JERUSALEM: The United States faced stiff international and Palestinian criticism yesterday over its decision to no longer consider Israeli settlements illegal, while the Jewish state’s premier cheered on the “historic” move. The United Nations and European Union stressed the decision would not change the reality that the settlements were illegal, while the Arab League condemned the unilateral move announced Monday by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, however, said he was “very moved” by the announcement.

Kuwait insists on and stresses the unlawfulness and illegality of Jewish settlements on occupied Palestinian lands, which are in clear violations of international laws

Continued on Page 24

## In the desert of Dubai, salmon farming thrives

DUBAI: From a control room in the middle of Dubai’s desert, Norway’s sunrises and sunsets and the cool currents of the Atlantic are recreated for the benefit of thousands of salmon raised in tanks despite searing conditions outside. Dubai is no stranger to ambitious projects, with a no-limits approach that has seen a palm-shaped island built off its coast, and a full-scale ski slope created inside a shopping mall.

But the farming of salmon in the desert is “something that no one could have



HEBRON: An Israeli border guard points a laser light at the camera as others keep watch while a bulldozer demolishes Palestinian houses near Al-Arub camp on the outskirts of this West Bank town yesterday. — AFP



DUBAI: Bader bin Mubarak, chief executive of Fish Farm, throws food pellets into the tank at the facility on Oct 15, 2019. — AFP



## Local

# Kuwait Amir receives Crown Prince, Speaker, former PMs



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, and former prime ministers His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-

Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as part of consultations to form the new government. His Highness the Crown Prince also

received Ghanem and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince sent letters yesterday to His

Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, expressing deepest thanks and gratitude for the distinguished efforts he exerted as the state's prime minister. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

## Gulf Cup 'clear indication' of solution of crisis: Jarallah



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah joins in cutting the cake during a reception organized by the Palestinian Embassy to mark the country's national day. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan (right) with Palestinian Ambassador to Kuwait Rami Tahboub (center) and the ambassador's wife Rima Al-Khalidi.



A Palestinian folklore dance performed during the ceremony.



Qatar's Ambassador to Kuwait Bandar bin Mohammad Al-Attiah (left) and Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad Al Saud (right) attend the ceremony.

KUWAIT: Kuwait said Monday participation of all Arab Gulf countries' football teams in the upcoming Gulf Cup in Doha, Qatar, "is a clear indication of the progress towards solving the crisis" in the Gulf. Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah,

speaking on the sidelines of a reception organized by the Palestinian Embassy to mark the country's national day, said there would be other steps following the Gulf Cup "which affirm we are heading in the right direction to reach positive results." He

expressed optimism there would be contacts at all levels to bring about "a quick end" to this crisis. Jarallah was asked about the timing of the next GCC summit, and said no date was set and there were ministerial meetings to prepare for the summit. —

## Profile of new PM Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah issued a decree yesterday appointing Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as Prime Minister, and tasking him with nominating members of the new government. The new government, which is the 36th in the country's political history, would be Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's first-ever since becoming the eighth Prime Minister of Kuwait.

Born in Kuwait in 1953, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Kuwait University in 1977. He joined the Foreign Ministry in 1978 as a diplomatic attache, serving in the Arab affairs department 1978-1983 and with the permanent Kuwaiti mission at the (UN) 1983-1989. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled has also served as Kuwait's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Envoy at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) from 1995 to 1998, during which he participated in the GCC Ministerial Council's meetings. He has also been awarded with the Order of King Abdulaziz of First-Class in 1998.

In 1998, he was appointed by a decree as the Chief of National Security Bureau with a ministerial status. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled has also been appointed as Minister of Social Affairs and Labor between July 2006 and March 2007, and Minister of Information between May 2008 and January 2009. In 2011, he was appointed as Foreign Minister, and lat-



KUWAIT: In this file photo taken on May 14, 2019, Kuwait's then-Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah arrives to attend a session of the National Assembly in Kuwait City. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

er as Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs in February 2012. In December 2012, he was re-assigned as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. In January 2014, an Amiri decree ordered the appointment of Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah as First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. In December 2016, he was re-assigned as Foreign minister, and appointed as Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister in December 2017. — KUNA

## Three e-businesses qualify for final round of KIPCO award

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company - and the Youth Empowerment Organization (Tmkeen) announced the names of the three e-media and technology businesses that have advanced to the final judging round of the Fifth KIPCO Tmkeen Award for Young Entrepreneurs.

The three businesses that qualified are Drop In (@dropin\_kw) - a local concierge application that allows you to place orders from stores near you; Fanajeen (@fanajeenbooks) - an application that offers audio and written summaries of books that you can read in under 20 minutes; and Routine (@lets.routine) - an application that offers users healthy nutrition options and subscriptions.

The entrepreneurs each gave a 5-7 minute presentation about their companies in the preliminary judging round. The judges were KIPCO Group professionals representing Burgan Bank, Gulf Insurance Group, OSN, United Real Estate, KAMCO Investment Company, Qurain

Petrochemical Industries, United Networks, AUK and Marina FM.

Eman Al-Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Communications Director, said: "First and foremost, I thank all the entrepreneurs who participated for taking up this challenge. Every year, they set the bar higher, making it increasingly more difficult for our judges to decide who moves on to the next round. Many of the businesses showed strong potential, and we are proud to be able to shed light on the work of these entrepreneurs through the KIPCO Tmkeen Award. I would also like to extend my appreciation to all my colleagues from across the KIPCO Group who formed the judging panels. I hope that the young business owners will continue to seek the guidance of the KIPCO professionals they interacted with on the judging panels today, and benefit from their expertise as they expand their businesses."

Abdulrahman Al-Adsani, Head of the Tmkeen Symposium Organizing Committee,

said: "Year on year, the interest in this award grows, and we are delighted with this year's turnout and the impressive businesses we saw presented today. The presentations were very promising, and we hope that this has been a learning experience for entrepreneurs on how to successfully pitch their businesses to potential investors. Together with KIPCO, we have taken Tmkeen's mission beyond inspiring and educating young entrepreneurs to providing actual support to ensure that their businesses are sustainable. We wish the top three finalists all the best in the final judging round."

The final judging round will take place in December, and the winner will be announced during the Youth Empowerment Symposium. This year's winner will be awarded with \$100,000 worth of services from the KIPCO Group as well as \$15,000 in cash. In addition, the second and third place winners will be rewarded with \$10,000 and \$5,000 respectively.



KUWAIT: KIPCO Tmkeen Award judges and organizers.



# Kuwait Amir receives credentials of newly appointed ambassadors



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Kuwait. — Amiri Diwan photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Honduras to Kuwait.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday the newly appointed Ambassadors of Sri Lanka, Honduras, the European Union (EU), and Greece to the State of Kuwait. Minister of the Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign

Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Amiri Diwan Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Undersecretary at the Amiri Diwan and head of His Highness the Amir's office Ahmad Al-Fahad, and head of Amiri Protocols Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah attended the ceremonies. — KUNA

## Kuwait Amir sends condolences to UAE President

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to the UAE President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan expressing sincere sorrow for the passing of his brother Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the head of state's representative. His Highness the Crown Prince

Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the outgoing Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. His Highness the Amir also sent a cable of condolences to the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammad

bin Zayed Al Nahyan expressing sincere sorrow for the passing of his brother Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the outgoing Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of the EU to Kuwait.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Greece to Kuwait.



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and Greece's Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias sign an agreement between the two countries.— KUNA

## Kuwait, Greece sign several agreements

KUWAIT: Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met yesterday with the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs Nikos Dendias and his accompanying delegation. The meeting discussed the overall close bilateral relations connecting the two countries, and ways to enhance them on all levels. It also discussed the latest developments on the regional and international scenes, in addition to other issues of mutual concerns. After the meeting, both sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the agricultural field between the Government of the State of Kuwait and the Government of the Republic of Greece. A MoU was also signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the two countries in the field of diplomatic training. The agreement was signed by

Minister Nicolas on behalf of the Greek side while Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah represented the Kuwaiti side. The signing ceremony was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Walid Al-Khubaizi, Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols' Affairs Dhari Al-Ajran, Kuwait's Ambassador to Greece Saud Al-Dowaish, Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ayham Al-Omar, Acting Assistant Foreign Minister for the Office of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ambassador Saleh Al-Loughani, and other senior officials at the ministry.

Earlier yesterday, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem received the visiting Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs and his accompanying delegation. The meeting discussed bilateral relations between the two countries and main developments in the regional and international scenes. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah also received the Greek minister and his delegation, in presence of Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Ambassador Dowais. — KUNA

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## Local

# Kuwait and Sierra Leone ink deals, promote bilateral ties

## Sierra Leone Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation visits Kuwait

By Chidi Emmanuel

**KUWAIT:** The Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone Nabeela Farida Tunis has praised Kuwait-Sierra Leone bilateral relations. The Sierra Leonean minister, who was on an official visit to Kuwait, met with Kuwait's Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister and the Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce. "We had a very fruitful meeting and discussions," she said, adding that another meeting is scheduled in January next year - which is aimed at creating partnerships and boosting ties.

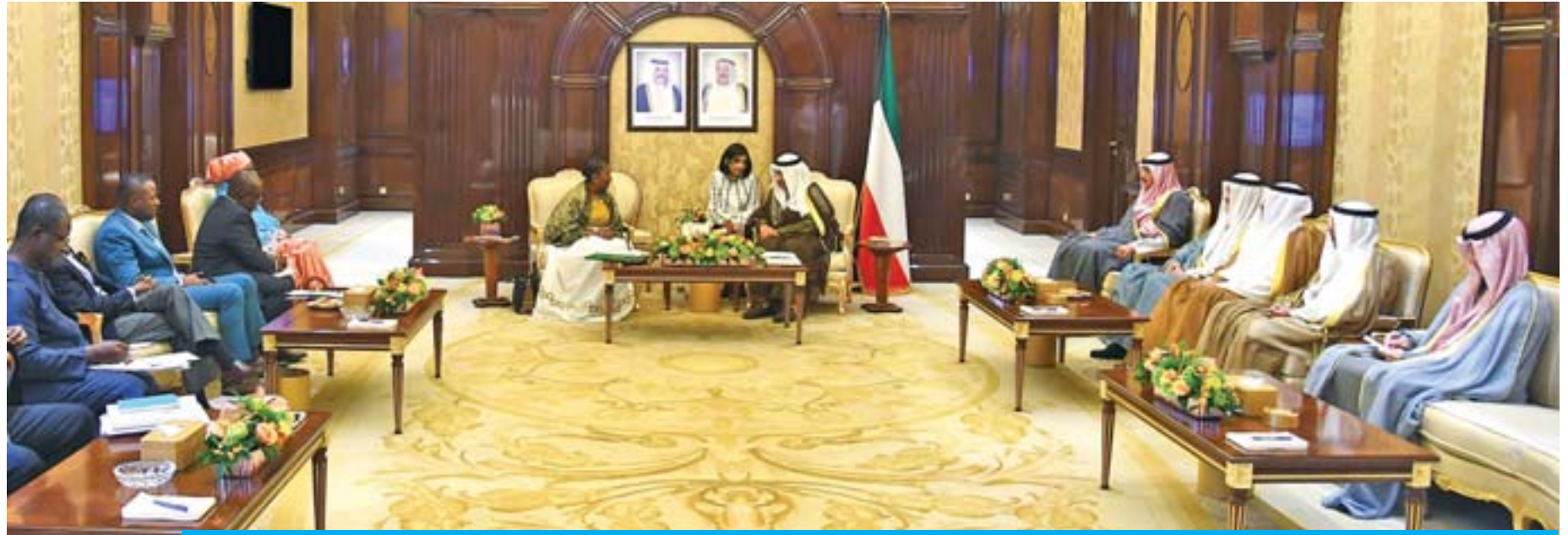


### Kuwait Fund supports water supply in Sierra Leone

Following the meeting, a \$20 million deal was signed with Kuwait Fund For Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to support water supply in Sierra Leone. Several other agreements were signed between the two countries in technical education and vocational training - including an agreement to establish a joint committee for cooperation.

Another agreement was also sealed by the Kuwait Fund and Sierra Leone's Guma Valley Water Company (GVWC) for the management of the project, the KFAED said in a statement. These projects were aimed at revamping water and sanitation services in Greater Freetown Area as part of efforts to achieve ecological sustainable development and tap natural resources in an efficient mode, it added. This is the 10th loan provided by the Kuwaiti Fund to Sierra Leone as it has already offered it nine loans valued at a total of KD 32.7 million, along with technical aid in the vicinity of KD 449,000, according to the statement.

Earlier on Sunday, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Sierra Leone's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Tunis handed in a letter from the President of Sierra Leone Julius Maada Bio addressed



**KUWAIT:** His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Sierra Leone's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Nabeela Farida Tunis and her accompanying delegation.

to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The Sierra Leonean president expressed joy over the successful medical checkups undertaken by His Highness the Amir. Cooperation between KFAED and Sierra Leone started in 1989 during the signing of the first agreement to finance the Waterloo-Kent road. The cooperation mainly embraces transport and health sectors.

As part of efforts to promote tourism and investments, the Sierra Leonean minister pointed out the key programs lined up to make Sierra Leone an investment magnet and one of the greatest economies in Africa. She urged Kuwaiti investors to explore the vast Sierra Leonean market and investment opportunities. On tourism, the minister said the government is now issuing visa on arrival, adding that some taxes have been waived as part of the incentives which are tailored to make the African nation a tourism magnate. The minister in her goodwill message reaffirmed the embassy's commitment in promoting bilateral relations. He urged Sierra Leoneans and Africans in Kuwait to be law abiding and be good ambassadors of their countries.



**KUWAIT:** Sierra Leone Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Nabeela Farida Tunis (center) and Sierra Leonean Ambassador to Kuwait Haja Ishata Thomas (second right) pose for a group photo at the ambassador's residence.

## Kuwait renews calls for Israel to join NPT

**NEW YORK:** Kuwait renewed calls on Israel to join Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), since being the only entity that did not join in the Middle East. This came in a speech by Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi on Monday during the 'Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction.' Otaibi stressed on

building an inclusive foundation of peace and security with banning nuclear and mass destruction weapons. He assured that Kuwait has always sought to support the banning of these weapons, stressing on backing and support by the United Nation regarding this issue. "Unfortunately, we noticed the lack of seriousness by some parties, exclusively that Israel is the only State in the region that is not party to the Non Proliferation Treaty which resulted in postponing the conference until further notice," Ambassador Otaibi said. "Our major goal is to achieve security and stability," he added. In addition, Otaibi stressed on working together in order to establish nuclear weapon free zone on both sides regionally and internationally. Moreover, he expressed his hopes that this conference will push for a stronger commitment towards a nuclear weapon free world. — KUNA



**BRUSSELS:** The first meeting of the Belgian-Kuwait economic committee in progress. — KUNA

## Belgium, Kuwait keen to strengthen economic cooperation

**BRUSSELS:** The first ever meeting of the Belgian-Kuwait economic committee began in Brussels yesterday with both sides expressing their desire to expand and strengthen bilateral economic cooperation. "We all look forward to an open and frank dialogue, to work together to deepen cooperation which shall serve our mutual interest," Kuwait's assistant foreign minister for economic affairs Amal Al-Hamad said in her opening remarks. She expressed her happiness to lead Kuwait's delegation to the first meeting of the Kuwait Belgium economic committee.

She noted that Kuwait and Belgium enjoy historical and strong relations that go back to 1964. Through Kuwait National Development plan, the mechanism for implementing Kuwait Vision 2035, the country is showing improvement on all economic fronts, she noted. Kuwait has been listed among the top reformers in the ease of doing business, report published by the world group. Kuwait ranks among the top countries with rank improvement in the World Economic Forum competitiveness. The stock market of Kuwait is being upgraded to that of an emerging market country, said Hamad. The trade exchanges between Belgium and Kuwait has increased from 204 million euros in 2017 to 220 million euros in 2018, said Hamad.

Meanwhile, Anick van Calster, Director General for bilateral affairs at the Belgian Foreign Ministry, in her opening remarks said yesterday's meeting would discuss ways to promote the bilateral economic relations and to learn from each other's experience. This is an important occasion to give impetus to the bilateral economic cooperation, she said and noted that "what our enterprises need most is to exchange ideas and learn from each other's experiences."

The Kuwait Vision 2035 economic plan under the patronage of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah offers a rich opportunity that Kuwait has to offer to all those who wish to invest in the country, said Van Calster Raoul Delcrode, head of the Middle East and North Africa Department in the Belgian foreign ministry, adding that Belgium and Kuwait enjoy "robust relations." He noted that Kuwait's Vision 2035 is of great interest for "our companies here in Belgium." Belgian companies are ready to engage with their Kuwaiti counterparts to see the opportunities in oil and gas sector in port management in dredging sector, he said. "We are ready from the Belgian side to share our experiences," he said and added that they are looking forward to a fruitful exchange.

The meeting is held at Egmont Palace with the participation of representatives from 11 Kuwaiti agencies and nine agencies from the Belgian side. "The most important and interesting part of the meeting will be the session on success story in which the companies from Belgium and Kuwait will relate their success stories in the two countries," according to Kuwait's ambassador to Belgium, EU and NATO Jassem Al-Budaiwi. — KUNA

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Local

# MPs demand new premier to have clearly-defined plan to fight corruption

## Calls for general amnesty for sentenced former MPs

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Well-informed sources said that lawmakers intend to give the new Prime Minister HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah a four-month grace period to work on some unfinished issues, after which they will start filing grilling motions against non-cooperating ministers or the premier himself. "This is the last parliamentary term before the parliament concludes its tenure in June and some MPs plan to utilize this period to make more electoral gains," the sources said.

The sources added 10 MPs, including Mohammed Al-Mutair, Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, Abdul Kareem Al-Kandari, Abdul Wahab Al-Babtain and Thamer Suwait, will demand two basic things from the PM to avoid a political confrontation with him. "The first will be setting a clearly-defined plan to fight corruption, hold corrupt public servants legally accountable, refer financial suspicions to the public prosecution and respond to the State Audit Bureau report with documents and without any delay," the sources explained, adding that the second condition will be for the government to approve issuing a general amnesty and cancel the sentences passed against former MPs involved in breaking into the parliament, some of whom are still abroad.

"Without accepting these two conditions, political confrontations with the new PM may continue in the current term," the sources underlined. However, a majority of lawmakers expect more cooperation with the current PM because the reasons for confrontation

with the previous premier are over after he was replaced. This majority hopes to proceed with laws agreed upon by the parliamentary priorities committee and use them as a roadmap until the end of this term.

### Suspect released

The criminal court yesterday released a ruling family member who had been indicted for verbally abusing traffic department police officer Lt Col Saleh Al-Rashed after the latter dropped charges against him.

### 2,000 citizens resigned

Recent Ministry of Education (MoE) statistics showed 2,000 citizens had resigned from MoE and the ministry of higher education in the period of 2016-2019. Responding to a parliamentary inquiry by MP Khalil Al-Saleh, MoE explained that several reasons were behind the resignations including personal ones, absence, disciplinary dismissal or to execute a court order. Separately, the private education directorate set a timetable for the first term exams in Arabic and model private schools for grades 5-9, said informed sources, noting that the exams will be held in the period of Dec 15-23. The sources added that all concerned schools have been notified of the exam timetable and instructed to distribute them to students, adding an extra 30 minutes for learners with special needs.

### Retinopathy treatment

Ophthalmologists at Farwaniya Hospital yesterday



KUWAIT: Nighttime view of Kuwait City. — KUNA photo

met and discussed the latest treatment for retinopathy - an eye injection - which was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration last month and will be available

in Kuwait soon. "The special thing about this injection is that it is given to patients every three months instead of the current ones given every month," they said.

## Man dead, another injured in crash

**KUWAIT:** A collision between a cleaning vehicle and a pick-up truck at Fourth Ring Road resulted in the death of a Kuwaiti man, while a worker was injured. Policemen worked to restore traffic flow, as the injured was sent to hospital and the deceased's body was sent to concerned authorities.

### Reckless drivers held

Jahra police arrested three reckless youth, one of whom was wanted in a felony case. The three used

Waha roundabouts to play the "death game" and disturbed residents of the area, who called the police. The suspects' vehicles were impounded.

### Sergeant arrested

A police lieutenant noticed a driver showing off in his car, so he checked the license plate and found the owner is a police sergeant. He asked him to stop, but the driver did not pay heed and continued his act until he collided with the patrol car. The sergeant then argued with the lieutenant and attacked him. The lieutenant sustained eye and mouth injuries. The suspect was arrested and charged accordingly.

### Inmates cause chaos

Women police at the central prison brought two

inmates under control as they caused a disturbance and attacked a policewoman during a search. The two inmates objected to the search, declined to obey orders, became hysterical and started shouting. The policewoman who was attacked obtained a medical report and lodged a complaint at Sulaibiya police station.

### Swindling

Criminal detectives arrested an ex-convict for swindling a Kuwaiti man in cahoots with another man, as they convinced him to become a partner in a cafe project. After he paid the suspects KD 5,000, the two then disappeared and did not answer his calls.

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai



Dr Abdelmutaleb Behbehani

## Specialist touts 'revolution' in ophthalmology treatment

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** Ophthalmologist, and Associate Professor at Kuwait University's College of Medicine Dr Abdelmutaleb Behbehani said new technology and techniques caused a 'progressive treatment revolution' in ophthalmology, stressing the importance of this achievement especially in light of the fact that 3.5 percent of people in Kuwait are poor sighted, including 50,000 Kuwaitis. He added that genetics is one of the most common causes of poor sightedness, followed by the environmental factor, and warned against excessive use of electronics that worsens vision, especially with children. He said children below two years of age should not use them. "Ophthalmology practiced today is almost totally different from how it was 20 years ago," he said, alluding to the advancements reached in this field within that period. Behbehani said changes are in many facets, as for example, cataracts surgeries are performed completely different compared to how they were performed before. Another example is diabetic retina, as 20 years ago, LASIK was the dominant operation, but now there are new techniques that caused a great advancement in this field.

## Lawyer's kidnappers sentenced to life in prison

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** The criminal court yesterday sentenced a Kuwaiti lawyer and four expats to life in prison over charges of kidnapping lawyer Saud Al-Helfi from Kuwait City and taking him to Kabd. The incident took place in February of this year when police stopped a vehicle with four Arab men, only to discover a fifth man tied up inside. Investigation revealed that the four had kidnapped the man at the orders of another lawyer, and took him to a private property in Kabd where they tortured him in a bid to extort money from him.

### Monitoring cameras

Headed by member Maha Al-Baghli, the Municipal Council's environment affairs committee yesterday approved a proposal by member Hmoud Al-Enezi mandating cleaning companies to use surveillance cameras to monitor and record garbage collection operations.



KUWAIT: Thousands of violations were reported in an inspection tour carried out by a government team in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh yesterday. The team closed 120 stores, disconnected electricity to 43 buildings, removed 10,000 tons of construction waste material and garbage, removed 223 commercial shades, arrested 120 street vendors pending deportation and destroyed two tons of foul foodstuff, according to Kuwait Municipality. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh





Persecuted Catholics 'honored' to glimpse Pope Francis in Thailand

## Swedish prosecutor drops Assange rape investigation

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TEHRAN: An Iranian woman walks past an artistic mural. —AFP

# Dozens may be dead in Iran protests

## US has condemned Iran for using 'lethal force'

**GENEVA:** The United Nations voiced alarm yesterday at reports dozens may have been killed in Iranian demonstrations, as the Islamic republic said it will unblock the internet only once calm has been restored. Iran's shock decision to impose petrol price hikes last Friday sparked the protests in which at least five people are confirmed to have been killed, three of them security personnel officials say were stabbed to death by "rioters".

The UN rights office said it was alarmed by reports live ammunition was used against protesters and had caused a "significant number of deaths across the country". But its spokesman Rupert Colville told reporters in Geneva that casualty details were hard to verify, in part because of the internet shutdown now in its third day. "Iranian media and a number of other sources suggest dozens of people may have been killed and many people injured during protests in at least eight different provinces, with over 1,000 protesters arrested," he said. "We urge the Iranian authorities and security forces to avoid the use of force to disperse peaceful assemblies."

Colville also called on protesters to demonstrate peacefully, "without resorting to physical violence or destruction of property". AFP journalists saw two petrol stations in Tehran gutted by fire and damage to infrastructure, including a police station.

They were prevented from filming as hundreds of riot police guarded squares with armored vehicles and water cannon. State television showed footage of rallies against "rioting" held in the northwestern city of Tariz and Shahr-e Qods, west of Tehran. "Protesting is the people's right, rioting is the work of enemies," they chanted in Tabriz, according to Fars news agency.

### Knives and machetes

When the demonstrations began on Friday, drivers stopped on major thoroughfares in Tehran to block traffic. The protests soon turned violent and spread to more than 40 cities and towns, with banks, petrol stations and other public property set ablaze and shops looted. The demonstrations erupted after it was announced the price of petrol would be raised by 50 percent for the first 60 liters purchased over a month and 200 percent for any extra fuel after that.

Iran's economy has been battered since May last year when the United States unilaterally withdrew from a 2015 nuclear agreement and re-imposed crippling sanctions. Footage of masked young men clashing with security forces has been broadcast on state television, which rarely shows any signs of dissent.

In a video aired Monday night, a man can be seen firing what appears to be an

assault rifle as others hurl stones apparently at security forces in the western city of Andimeshk. In the latest bloodshed, assailants wielding knives and machetes ambushed and killed three security personnel west of Tehran, news agencies reported late Monday. One was Morteza Ebrahimi, a commander of the Revolutionary Guards and father of a newborn child, according to Fars.

The others were Majid Sheikh, 22, and Mostafa Rezaie, 33. Both served in the Basij militia, a volunteer force loyal to the establishment. It is the worst violence since at least 25 lives were lost in protests over economic hardship that started in Iran's second city Mashhad in December 2017 before spreading to other urban centers. In response to the latest violence, the authorities say they have arrested hundreds of people.

### Internet 'abuse'

Iran said yesterday the internet will only be unblocked when authorities are sure it will not be misused. "The internet will come back gradually in some provinces where there are assurances the internet will not be abused," government spokesman Ali Rabiee said. The outage has stemmed the flow of videos shared on social media of protests or associated acts of violence. Netblocks, a website that monitors global net shutdowns, said internet connectivity in

Iran was at four percent on Tuesday compared with normal levels.

"Sixty-five hours after #Iran implemented a near-total internet shutdown, some of the last remaining networks are now being cut," it tweeted. Iran announced the decision to impose petrol price hikes and rationing at midnight Thursday-Friday, saying it was aimed at helping the needy. The plan, agreed by the president, parliament speaker and judiciary chief, comes at a sensitive time ahead of February parliamentary elections.

It has received the public support of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. President Hassan Rouhani has defended the price hike, saying the proceeds will go to 60 million Iranians. The US has condemned Iran for using "lethal force". Iran hit back, slamming Secretary of State Mike Pompeo after he tweeted "the United States is with you" in response to the demonstrations. Iran's judiciary spokesman, Gholamhossein Esmaili, warned the authorities would deal firmly with those who endanger security and carry out arson attacks. He also called on citizens to inform on "seditionists" who have committed acts of violence. Officials say some of those arrested have confessed to being trained inside and outside Iran and having "received money" to set fire to public buildings. —AFP

## Fears as Russian MPs back foreign agent tag for bloggers, journalists

**MOSCOW:** Rights activists warned yesterday of greater curbs on media and online freedom in Russia as MPs backed a controversial bill that could lead bloggers and independent journalists to be labeled "foreign agents". Lawmakers want to broaden existing legislation that forces foreign-funded media and NGOs to describe themselves as "foreign agents," by including individuals

The lower house of parliament, the State Duma, approved the amendments without any debate in the crucial second reading yesterday afternoon. The final reading will be Thursday, after which the bill must go through the upper house and then signed off by President Vladimir Putin. Foreign agents, defined as involved in politics and receiving money from abroad, must register with the justice ministry, label publications with the tag and submit detailed paperwork or face fines.

Critics say extending the law to individuals would affect bloggers and even ordinary social media users, although some ruling party lawmakers denied this. Amnesty International in a joint statement with other rights groups, including Journalists Without Borders, decried the move as "a further step to restrict free and independent media" and "a strong tool to silence opposition voices". Authors say the bill is intended to "perfect" existing legislation on "foreign agents" that already covers NGOs and media organizations.

Russia says it wants the law as a tit-for-tat mechanism if its journalists are defined as foreign agents in the West. "This wraps up the creation of a series of reciprocal measures... in case there are restrictions on Russian media's work or people working for them abroad," Leonid Levin, the head of the Duma's information policy department, told parliament.

### 'Primarily affect bloggers'

The politician acknowledged "concerns" that the bill may affect bloggers and social media users, but insisted it would not be applied lightly. "I stress the text says 'can receive' (the status) but that doesn't mean they necessarily get it," Levin said. It will be necessary to prove a journalist or blogger collaborated with foreign media or a foreign agent and received compensation for it, he added. Yet the RBK independent news site warned the law will "primarily affect bloggers."

"You don't need to be a journalist, it's enough just to write something on social media," wrote political observer Anton Orekh. Rights activist Alexander Verkhovsky, who sits on Putin's human rights council, warned the law could affect anyone who posts online and receives money from abroad, even for unrelated reasons. But President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissed such concerns as "horror stories". —AFP

## Ex-PM Sharif flown by air ambulance to London

**LAHORE:** Pakistan's ailing ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif left by air ambulance yesterday for London, where he is due to receive medical treatment after battling the government for permission to travel, his doctor and close aides said. Sharif, 69, is suffering from an autoimmune blood disorder, has high blood pressure, and his kidney functions are deteriorating, according to aides. His doctor has said he is "fighting for his life".

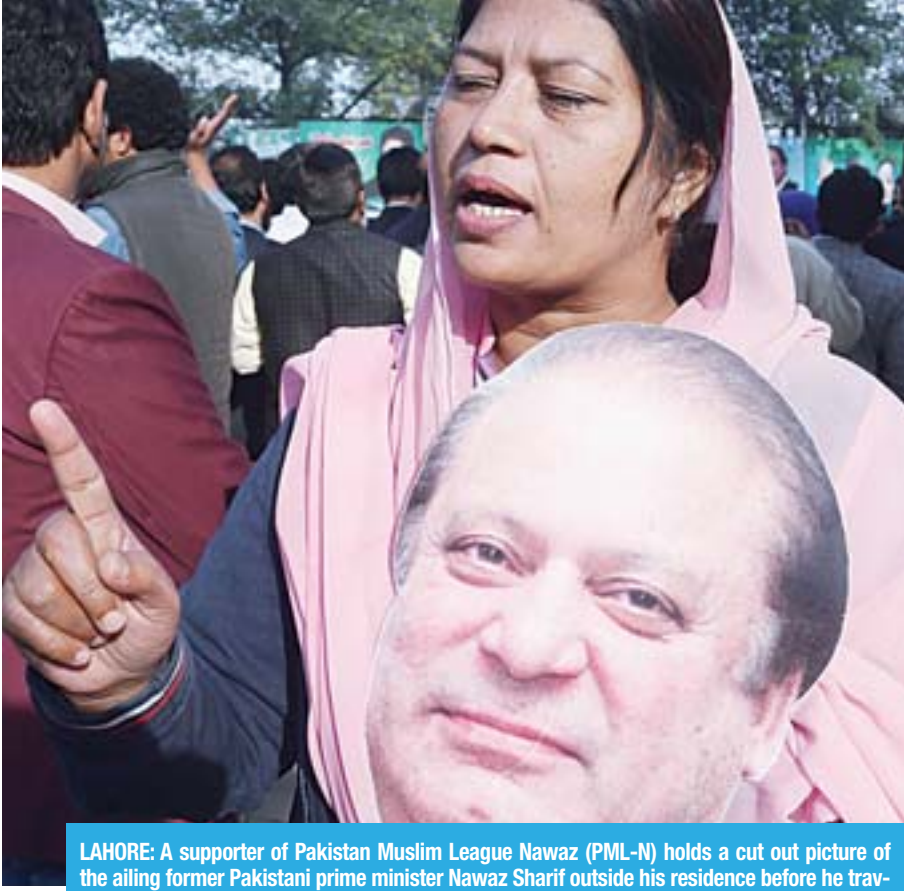
He had been in prison serving a sentence for corruption, but was bailed last month to receive treatment. Since then his party and family have been fighting to get his name removed from a travel stop list to allow him to go overseas for treatment. The government of Sharif's rival Imran Khan had said it would not stand in the way, but last week demanded he pay a bond of seven billion Pakistani rupees (\$45 million) as a con-

dition of his travel — which Sharif's party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), immediately rejected.

After days of political deadlock the condition was finally lifted and Sharif was flown to London via Doha on a Qatar Airways air ambulance. Party workers showered rose petals on his car as it left his house on the outskirts of the eastern city of Lahore. Senior PML-N member Pervaiz Rasheed confirmed to reporters that Sharif was en route to London.

Sharif's aides have said the unexplained cause and uncertain diagnosis of his illness require advanced investigations and specialized care. The courts have granted him four weeks to receive treatment, though that can be extended pending medical advice. Known as the "Lion of Punjab", Sharif is a political survivor who has repeatedly roared back to the country's top office. He served three terms — but did not complete a single one.

His first, beginning in 1990, ended in 1993 when he was sacked for corruption. The second lasted from 1997 to 1999, when he was deposed by the powerful military. Sharif blamed the security establishment for again targeting him in 2017 when the Supreme Court disqualified him from politics for life over graft allegations, which he denies. —AFP



LAHORE: A supporter of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) holds a cut out picture of the ailing former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif outside his residence before he travelled to Lahore airport prior to his departure abroad for medical treatment. —AFP



## International

# Trump under pressure in the 2nd week of impeachment hearings

## Pelosi: The president abused his power for his own personal, political benefit

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump faces more potentially damning testimony in the Ukraine scandal as a critical week of public impeachment hearings opens in the House of Representatives. Trump's suggestion that he might himself testify in the investigation which threatens his presidency had no impact on the House Intelligence Committee's plans to interview nine witnesses this week.

Most significantly, they include Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the European Union, who allegedly transmitted to the Ukraine government Trump's demands for help in finding dirt on his Democratic rivals ahead of next year's presidential election. The hearings also include diplomats who have already testified privately that Trump and Sondland repeatedly pushed Kiev to open investigations into Democrat Joe Biden — Trump's potential 2020 reelection challenger — and withheld nearly \$400 million in aid and a White House meeting requested by Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky as pressure.

House leader Nancy Pelosi said Monday in a letter to fellow Democrats that Trump engaged in "extortion and bribery." "The facts are uncontested: that the president abused his power for his own personal, political benefit, at the expense of our national security interests," she said.

### Trump could testify in writing

Trump, who faces becoming only the third president in US history to be impeached, tweeted early Monday that he is "strongly" considering testifying to defend himself against allegations that he abused his powers in seeking foreign help for the 2020 election. He tweeted that Pelosi suggested "that I testify about the phony Impeachment Witch Hunt." "She also said I could do it in writing," he said.

"Even though I did nothing wrong, and don't like giving credibility to this No Due Process Hoax, I like

the idea & will, in order to get Congress focused again, strongly consider it!" Pundits were skeptical and said the likelihood of Trump following through was low, but there were no other signals one way or another from the White House and Congress. In Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into whether Trump's 2016 campaign colluded with Russia, Trump hinted early on that he would testify and then stalled for months before answering written questions. Even so, his lawyers negotiated strict limits on what kind of questions could be put, and in dozens of instances, Trump said he could not "recall" the facts.

### Rising impeachment support

Democrats signaled they would plow ahead with the inquiry, scheduling nine witnesses this week. On Tuesday morning the Intelligence Committee will hear from Jennifer Williams, an advisor to Vice President Mike Pence, and Alexander Vindman, a Ukraine expert on the National Security Council. Both listened in on Trump's key July 25 phone call with Zelensky, in which the US leader pressured his counterpart to launch investigations into Biden and a wholly unsupported theory that Kiev aided Democrats in the 2016 race.

In the afternoon Kurt Volker, the former special US envoy to Ukraine, and National Security Council official Timothy Morrison will testify. Conceivably this week could wrap up the Democrats' investigation and see them prepare the evidence collected to send to the House Judiciary Committee to draw up articles of impeachment. Democrats have also demanded testimony from several senior White House and State department officials, especially Trump's chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, who personally discussed Ukraine policy with Trump, and have also subpoenaed internal records.

But so far the White House has refused to let them testify and release the records. Rather than engaging



WASHINGTON DC: Republican Representative from Ohio Jim Jordan (C), Republican legal counsel Steve Castor (L) and Republican Representative from Texas Mike Conaway (R) listen to testimony during the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence public hearing on the impeachment inquiry into US President Donald J. Trump. —AFP

in a long court battle to force the testimony, Democrats have suggested they will simply consider adding obstruction of the investigation to the charges against Trump and push ahead toward a vote on impeachment by the full House. That would likely pass the Democrat-controlled House, to place Trump on trial in the Senate, where a Republican majority could protect him from removal. But with presidential and congressional elections now less than one year away, much depends on

politics and public sentiment.

An ABC-Ipsos poll released Monday showed a bare majority of Americans, 51 percent, believe Trump should be impeached and removed from office, up from around 48 percent in polls before last week's initial public testimony in Congress. The poll suggested as well a drop in the number of people opposing impeachment, to 38 percent, below the previous average of about 46 percent. —AFP

## Trump's doctor dismisses speculation of chest pain

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's doctor on Monday denied reports that the US president had recently suffered chest pain after he attended an unannounced medical checkup in Washington. Trump, 73, spent just over an hour on Saturday having "examinations, labs and discussions" at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, his physician Sean Conley said in a statement issued by the White House.

"Despite some of the speculation, the President has not had any chest pain, nor was he evaluated or treated for any urgent or acute issues," Conley said. "Specifically, he did not undergo any specialized cardiac or neurologic evaluations." Some Washington reports had suggested that the checkup was unscheduled and had been triggered by Trump suffering chest discomfort.

"Due to scheduling uncertainties, the trip was kept off the record," Conley said,

describing the checkup as "routine, planned." The statement included details of the president's cholesterol results and added that after the checkup, Trump had spoken to the family of a soldier undergoing surgery at the hospital as well as to hospital staff. White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham on Saturday said Trump took advantage of a free weekend to complete part of his annual physical examination before "a very busy 2020" when he faces a tough re-election race.

### 'Mysterious hospital visit'?

On Monday, the Washington Post ran an editorial casting doubt on the official reason for the medical examination. Under the headline "Trump's mysterious hospital visit raises many questions," the paper said that US citizens had the right to know about their president's health and if it impacted his work. "Wasn't his last checkup in February?" the paper asked.

"When did his annual physical become a phased affair? Why was Saturday's visit, unlike previous check-ups, not announced or listed on his public schedule?" On Sunday, the day after the checkup, Trump tweeted that he had started his annual physical examination — reporting "everything very good (great!)" He added that he would complete the examination next year.

At Trump's last routine examination

boy) or a pink one (for a girl).

With the rise of social media, gender reveals have become more and more sophisticated and "extreme," according to Carly Gieseler, a professor of gender and media studies at City University of New York (CUNY). She has studied the gender reveal trend since its birth at the end of the 2000s. What started as an "intimate, small gather" has become a "much larger spectacle, a much more grand affair," Gieseler told AFP.

"We've gotten to the point where you have explosions and fireworks, skydivers" appearing all over Instagram or YouTube. In Gieseler's opinion, gender reveal parties are "kind of filling a void for these communal gatherings that we don't really have as much anymore." They have become so trendy in the US that "it's almost an expectation of all parents at this point," she said. And specialized businesses have begun to pop up, all too eager to meet the demand.

### 'Who cares'?

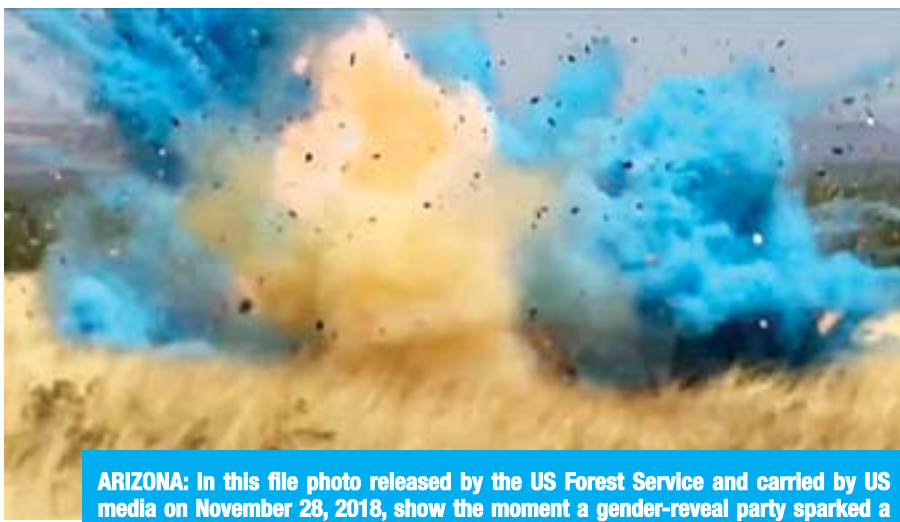
Baseball and golf balls that burst into puffs of pink or blue powder when hit, shooting targets, balloons, garlands, pastries... "There's a huge market," said



MARYLAND: US President Donald Trump makes his way to board Air Force One before departing from Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland on November 14, 2019. —AFP

in February, Conley had declared him to be in "very good health." Trump, who has confounded health experts with his penchant for junk food and avoidance of strenuous exercise, weighed 243 pounds at that time. In 2018, Trump's then-chief physician, Ronny Jackson,

held an unusually detailed press conference in which he declared Trump to have "incredibly good genes." Soon afterwards, Trump appointed him to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs, before Jackson withdrew his name from consideration. —AFP



ARIZONA: In this file photo released by the US Forest Service and carried by US media on November 28, 2018, show the moment a gender-reveal party sparked a wildfire in Green Valley. —AFP

Gieseler. It complements another American custom, that of the baby shower — a party, primarily for women, where an expecting mother is showered with gifts of baby supplies.

Although gender reveal parties may have managed to get men involved in the pre-birth festivities, they are also accused of reinforcing gender stereo-

types. "Even though the gender reveal seems to be something light-hearted, it does have implications in terms of reestablishing the gender binary, really imprinting a fetus that hasn't even been brought into the world yet with that idea of being either male or female and then all those gender roles and assumptions that go with it," said Gieseler. —AFP

## Boy or girl? US parents go too far in gender reveals

WASHINGTON: A plane crash in Texas, a deadly explosion in Iowa, a massive fire in Arizona — elaborate baby gender reveal parties, a growing trend among parents in the US, have taken a nightmarish turn. "It's a girl!" After dropping 350 gallons of pink-colored water, a small plane flying at low altitude suddenly stalled, crashing in a Texas field.

There were fortunately no victims in the early-September crash, but another such party — where expecting parents stage elaborate events to reveal their future child's sex — turned fatal when an Iowa woman, 56, was killed the following month by shrapnel from a pipe bomb. American parents are no longer satisfied with the traditional gender reveal method: cutting a cake to reveal, after much suspense, a blue interior (for a

## Yemen rebels seize two S Korean, one Saudi vessel

SANAA: Yemen's Iran-aligned rebels seized a Saudi-flagged tug and two South Korean vessels at the weekend, the insurgents and Seoul officials said yesterday. The incident follows a lull in Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia as one Riyadh official said the kingdom had established an

"open channel" with the rebels in a bid to end the four-year conflict.

The Houthis acknowledged they had seized three ships, including a Saudi one, in the Red Sea a few miles off Uqban island, west of the rebel-held capital Sanaa. Seoul's foreign ministry said a South Korean dredger was being towed by one Korean and one Saudi-flagged tug when they were seized by the Houthis. It added that a total of 16 crew, two of them South Korean, had been taken to the Red Sea port of Saleef, where they were being held by the rebels.

"All of our citizens... are healthy and safe," ministry officials said in a statement. "We are doing our very best for

the early release of our citizens." Seoul has sent the South Korean navy ship Cheonghae, which had been on anti-piracy standby off the coast of Oman, to waters near where the incident took place. The Saudi-led military coalition backing Yemen's internationally recognized government accused the rebels of "hijacking" the Rabigh-3, which a global tracking website described as a Saudi-flagged vessel.

The rebels yesterday said the three ships were seized off Uqban island after they entered "territorial waters without prior notice", according to a statement carried by their Al-Masirah television channel. The ships were taken to Saleef, it added, without disclosing the nationalities or number of crew members. The Houthi rebels have

been fighting the government and its allies for more than four years in a war that has pushed the country to the brink of famine.

A year after the Houthis seized Sanaa, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and their allies intervened in the conflict in support of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. Since 2015, tens of thousands of people — most of them civilians — have been killed in a conflict that has triggered what the United Nations has described as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Earlier this month, a senior Saudi official raised hopes of possible de-escalation after he said Riyadh had an "open channel" with the rebels with the goal of ending the conflict. —AFP



## International

# Swedish prosecutor drops Assange rape investigation

## Prosecutors had struggled for years to interrogate Assange

**STOCKHOLM:** Swedish prosecutors said yesterday they have dropped their investigation into jailed WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange over a 2010 rape allegation, even though they found the plaintiff's claim "credible". "My assessment is that all investigative measures that can be taken have been taken. But... the evidence is not strong enough to file an indictment," deputy director of public prosecutions Eva-Marie Persson told reporters.

The investigation was launched after a Swedish woman who met Assange at a conference in Stockholm in August 2010 accused the Australian of having unprotected sex with her while she was sleeping. She said she had repeatedly refused to have unprotected sex with him. Assange has always denied the allegation. "I want to stress that the plaintiff has given a credible and reliable account (of events). Her statement is clear, lengthy and detailed," Persson said in a statement. "But altogether, my assessment is that the evidence has weakened in such a way that there is no longer reason to continue the investigation." Prosecutors had struggled for years to interrogate Assange in person. "I have... determined that it cannot be proven that a crime has been committed. But it would be totally wrong of me to say that it is the plaintiff's fault," Persson told AFP. The 48-year-old WikiLeaks founder has been held at a top-security British prison since April after police dragged him out of the Ecuadoran embassy in London, where he had been holed up since 2012 to avoid an extradition order to Sweden. He was subsequently sentenced to 50 weeks in prison for breaching bail conditions when he took refuge in the embassy.

### Wanted by US

Swedish authorities closed the rape investigation in 2017, saying it was not possible to proceed as Assange could not be reached. But the case was reopened following his arrest in London. In September, prosecutors said they had interviewed seven witnesses over the summer in a bid to move the inquiry forward. The statute of limitations in the case expires in August 2020.

The plaintiff's lawyer, Elisabeth Massi Fritz, told AFP that she and her client would consider whether to appeal the prosecutor's decision. "I, and all of the prosecutors who have worked on this case, have always considered the plaintiff credible and reliable. As is the case today. The plaintiff stands by her strong account," she said. "After today's decision my client needs time to process everything that has happened over these nine years in order to be able to move on with her life."

Assange is also fighting a US bid to extradite him from Britain on charges filed under the Espionage Act that could see him given a sentence of up to 175 years in a US prison. Most of those charges relate to obtaining and disseminating classified information over his website WikiLeaks publishing military documents and diplomatic cables.

WikiLeaks editor-in-chief Kristinn Hrafnsson hailed the Swedish decision and said the US charges were Assange's main concern. "Let us now focus on the threat Mr Assange has been warning about for years: the belligerent prosecution of the United States and the threat it poses to the First Amendment," he said in a statement. —AFP



**STOCKHOLM:** Deputy Director of Public Prosecution, Eva-Marie Persson speaks during a press conference on the development of the case of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. —AFP

## Merkel's besieged coalition partner elects new leaders

**BERLIN:** Members of Germany's social-democratic party (SPD) begin voting in the second round of a leadership election yesterday in a showdown which could shape the future of Angela Merkel's coalition government. Junior coalition partners to Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU), the SPD elect their new leaders against a backdrop of disastrous poll ratings and internal division over their role in government.

The 425,630 party members have from yesterday until November 29 to cast their vote, as they elect the first male-female leadership duo in the party's 129-year history. In a leadership election dominated by one major issue, SPD members must choose between two pairs with differing views on the coalition government. In place since 2017, it is the third so-called "grand coalition" since 2005, and remains unpopular among voters and SPD members alike.

Incumbent finance minister Olaf Scholz and his partner Klara Geywitz have argued for a continuation of the coalition until the next elections in 2021, though Scholz has also said it should be the last of its kind. A former mayor of Hamburg and currently Merkel's vice-chancellor, Scholz is considered a potential candidate to run for Chancellor himself if he and Geywitz win. Challengers Norbert Walter-Borjans and Saskia Esken, meanwhile, have earned support from the party's left and youth wings with a more critical stance on the coalition.

In a televised debate on Monday, Esken said that she would be prepared to let the government fall if the CDU and their Bavarian sister party refused to renegotiate the coalition agreement. The poll marks the climax of a five-month process, which began when former party leader Andrea Nahles stepped down in June. Nahles' resignation came after the once proud SPD picked up just 15.3 percent of the vote in May's EU elections, confirming their steady slide in poll ratings in recent years. —AFP

## Bolivia farmers rage against interim president

**SACABA:** On the road where they say nine local people were shot by Bolivian security forces last week, coca growers mourn the dead and vow to resist interim president Jeanine Anez. The farmers are supporters of ex-president Evo Morales, who was forced to resign in what he said was a coup as Bolivia has been rocked by violent protests after a disputed election. The farmers say the military and police opened fire when pro-Morales protesters tried to enter the central city of Cochabamba on Friday, in the deadliest incident of the month-long wave of demonstrations. Shortly before, Anez had issued a presidential decree granting security forces immunity from prosecution. "Before this, there were protests, but they did not use bullets... now anyone can come, fire bullets and not get punished," said Jaime Marcas, 26, wearing a woolen cap with earmuffs.

The road from Sacaba, the site of the killings, to Cochabamba — a Morales stronghold — has been blocked by security forces. "They don't let us into the city. They check everything, as if it were a border," Leonor Gonzalez told AFP, her face full of fury. She said the security forces on Friday deceived them by saying that they would let women go first into the city, but then they shot the men who were kept behind.

Interior Minister Arturo Murillo has hinted that the farmers may have fired at each other, but they deny being armed. Scattered stones, burnt tires and bundles of abandoned hats and shoes mark the scene of the incident. "These are from those people who managed to run," said one of the farmers standing guard amid the crowd. Nearby, nine black metal crosses with floral tributes wilting in the heat have been erected to remember the dead. —AFP

## Protesters mark a month that shook Chile

**SANTIAGO:** Stone-throwing Chilean demonstrators on Monday marked a month of furious, near daily street demonstrations that have roiled the country and signaled an overhaul of the country's social and economic model. Chanting "Chile has woken up!", around 3,000 demonstrators gathered in Santiago's Plaza Italia, the epicenter of the protests which at one point drew more than a million people onto the streets of the Chilean capital.

Some fought running battles with riot-police who used tear gas and rubber bullets against youths who threw molotov-cocktails. "I came to commemorate a month that changed Chile forever," said Susana, a 51-year-old accountant at the protest. "I think the government could make the changes we are demanding much faster. I don't believe Pinera," she said, referring to conservative President Sebastian Pinera.

What began with high school students refusing to pay a subway ticket hike on October 18 resulted in the deepest social crisis in the South American country since the return of democracy in 1990. "The street has forced the entire Chilean political class to do in a few hours what it did not want to do for 30 years," said Marcelo Mella, a political scientist at the University of Santiago. "This is proof that it was pos-

sible to do more than what has been done so far," said Mella. The protests have forced a re-think of the conservative billionaire president's right-wing agenda. "In the last four weeks, Chile has changed. Chileans have changed, we have all changed," Pinera said Sunday. Lawmakers last week bowed to one of the protesters' key demands, agreeing to hold a referendum next April to change the country's dictatorship-era constitution. However, despite forcing the elite to sit up and take notice, the most pressing problems — revamping the pension system, quality public health and education — remain untouched. A weekend opinion poll showed 67 percent of Chileans see the agreement on the constitutional referendum as "positive." With much of the heat has been taken out of the protests, demonstrators are divided between those who want to return to normality and those who want to keep up the pressure on the government, calling for faster and broader reforms.

### Dark chapter

"The street gave a lesson to all those who, without realizing it, had replaced their hope with resignation. The people have moved the boundaries of democracy," said Catalina Perez, a lawmaker with the leftist Democratic Revolution party from the city of Antofagasta. Replacing a constitution that resonates of a dark, repressive chapter in the country's past has been a key demand of protesters.

The current charter has been changed numerous times but has never established the state's responsibility to provide educa-



**SANTIAGO:** Demonstrators clash with riot police during a protest demanding greater social reform from Chilean President Sebastian Pinera. —AFP

## NATO chief to confront Macron on 'brain dead' claim

**BRUSSELS:** NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said yesterday he will visit Paris next week to seek an explanation from Emmanuel Macron after the French president dismissed the alliance as "brain dead". Stoltenberg mounted a vigorous defense of NATO ahead of a meeting of alliance foreign ministers, saying it was doing more than ever and warning against undermining it.

The diplomatic shockwaves from Macron's forthright interview with The Economist continue to rattle NATO just weeks before a summit in London meant as a 70th birthday celebration for the alliance. "I will go to Paris next week and there I intend to discuss these issues with President Macron — I think that's the best way to address any differences, to sit down and discuss them and to fully understand the messages and the motivations," Stoltenberg told reporters. "My message is that NATO is adapting, NATO is agile, NATO is responding."

Macron said he believed the alliance was

undergoing "brain death", decrying what he called a lack of strategic coordination between Europe and the United States and lamenting NATO member Turkey's recent unilateral military incursion in Syria. While French officials have argued that Macron was simply stating difficult truths that other allies preferred to ignore, there has been little public sympathy for his remarks — other than from the Kremlin, which welcomed them warmly.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned Macron's "sweeping judgments", insisting that NATO remained indispensable for European security. Several NATO members in eastern Europe — where concerns about Russia run high, fuelled by memories of Soviet domination — were horrified at the Macron interview, in which he also called for moves towards rapprochement with Moscow. The US ambassador to NATO, Kay Bailey Hutchison, said Washington "firmly disagreed" with Macron's assessment of NATO and with his call for Europe to be able to ensure its own defence without US support.

"The thought of only one of our countries or one of our groups of countries facing the enormous risks to our population alone is not even rational. We are stronger together," she said. The row over Macron's comments adds to the clouds looming over the

tion and health care. "The constitutional process will last two years, with several electoral milestones. This can help channel differences and moderate expectations," according to political analyst Juan Luis Monsalve. "We are all aware that we were in a straitjacket with this hereditary and petrified Constitution," said former center-left president Ricardo Lagos, who managed to forge a broad political consensus during his 2000-2006 presidency to remove the most undemocratic articles in the constitution.

### 'Excessive' force

Long seen as a haven of political and economic stability in volatile South America, the wave of unrest has killed 22 people. Most died in fires during looting, but five were killed at the hands of the security forces. More than 2,000 people were wounded. Rights groups have pointed to some 200 people who received serious eye injuries, including dozens who were blinded, by rubber bullets fired at the head by security forces. —AFP



**PARIS:** French President Emmanuel Macron (R) takes part in the 102nd Mayors Congress at the Maison de la Mutualite. —AFP

December 3-4 gathering of NATO leaders in London.

Organizers will be hoping for a less mercurial performance from US President Donald Trump than at the summit in Brussels last year where he caused consternation with his vehement criticism of defense

spending by Europe — and Germany in particular. The London meeting also comes with tensions running high with Turkey — both over its operation in Syria and increasing closeness to Moscow, manifested most dramatically in Ankara's purchase of Russia's S-400 anti-aircraft missiles. —AFP

## EU treats us like parking spot for migrants: Greek PM

**ATHENS:** Greece's prime minister has accused the European Union of treating countries on the bloc's external frontiers as convenient places to park migrants, in a newspaper interview published yesterday. Kyriakos Mitsotakis told German newspaper Handelsblatt that the EU "ignores the problem" of ris-

ing numbers of arrivals in Greece.

Roughly 1,350 people arrived on Greece's Aegean islands between Friday and Monday, according to the Greek coastguard, adding to more than 32,000 people already living in miserable conditions in Lesbos, Samos, Leros, Chios and Kos — camps with a combined capacity of just 6,200. "It cannot go on like this," said Mitsotakis, who won power in July. "Europe regards arrival countries such as Greece as a convenient parking spot for refugees and migrants. Is that European solidarity? No! I will no longer accept this."

Mitsotakis also singled out Turkey for criticism, saying President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was "trying

to use migration as a lever to pressure Europe and achieve concessions". In early November Erdogan said he would "open the gates" for millions of refugees held in camps in Turkey if the EU criticized his offensive against Kurdish-held areas of northern Syria — the latest in a series of similar threats. "I frankly told President Erdogan that he cannot abuse migrants and refugees as instruments if he wants to have good neighborly relations with Greece," Mitsotakis told the newspaper. At the beginning of October, Mitsotakis announced that 20,000 people would be relocated from the Greek islands to the mainland by the end of December to relieve congestion in the camps. —AFP



## International

# Persecuted Catholics ‘honored’ to glimpse Pope Francis in Thailand

## ‘When I think of how miserable my life is here I just cry’

**BANGKOK:** Clutching her entrance badge to see the Pope, Vietnamese Catholic refugee Ko Sa says attending the pontiff's mass this week is a great honor — a rare bright spot in her “miserable” life in limbo as an asylum seeker in Bangkok. Ko Sa is one of just a handful of Vietnamese Catholic refugees registered to attend the mass by Pope Francis, who arrives in Thailand on Wednesday carrying a message of peace and religious tolerance.

The four-day jaunt is the Pope's first trip to Thailand, where about 1,400 Vietnamese Christians and ethnic minorities have settled, many fearing religious persecution in communist Vietnam. Like Ko Sa, they are unable to legally settle in Thailand since the government has not signed on to UN conventions protecting refugees.

Many live in fear of arrest and long detention in immigration centers while they scrape by on under-the-table jobs for a few dollars a day. Some wait years for resettlement in a third country. The chance to glimpse the Pope at the Thursday mass is a welcome respite. “It's difficult to describe the feeling... It is a great honor for us to see him,” said 34-year-old Ko Sa, sitting on a mattress on the floor of a rented house where she lives with eight other people.

Her UN refugee ID does not shield her from police, and she has had to move several times to avoid immigration crackdowns. Though she's now fully free to practice her religion, she worries about the future. “When I think of how miserable my life is here I just cry,” added Ko Sa, who works as a cleaner for \$5 a day.

### ‘Forgotten people’

She arrived in Thailand seven years ago, hiding in a truck to cross the Cambodian border during a three-day journey. She fled Vietnam after she was accused of helping hide a relative who got caught up with police. As a Catholic and a member of the vulnerable K'Ho ethnic minority, she feared repercussions from authorities in the one-party state where religion is tightly controlled. The

US State Department lists Vietnam as a “country of particular concern” on its religious freedom index, accusing the government of targeting people because of their beliefs or religious freedom advocacy. Some prominent activists are Catholic — a denomination comprising seven percent of the population — and the communist government has long had an uneasy relationship with organised religion.

Today all religions in Buddhist-majority Vietnam are controlled by the state and any practitioners operating without official registration could face jail time. Vietnam broke off official ties with the Vatican in 1975, but relations have eased in recent years. It is not clear if the Pope will address Vietnam's Catholics this week, though his trip is raising hopes he could speak about the plight of refugees as he has since the migrant crisis of 2015. “This pope in particular also wants to encourage the awareness of the people who are forgotten, like refugees,” said Puttipong Puttansri, a Thai historian of the Catholic Church.

### ‘I can't sleep’

Any mention of refugees would be a boon for Chu Manh Son, a Vietnamese Catholic activist living in Thailand since 2017. He was among many Catholics who voiced anger over a 2016 toxic spill by a Taiwanese steel firm that killed tons of fish and decimated livelihoods. Son says he was imprisoned, beaten and forbidden from travelling for speaking out on the environmental disaster.

He and his wife paid traffickers \$600 to sneak them through the jungle where they at one point ran out of food and ate plants. They eventually made it to Bangkok where they attended a local church frequented by migrant laborers. Like Ko Sa, he used his UN refugee agency card as ID when parishes announced registration for the pontiff's visit. While he knows venturing out can be risky, his spirits were lifted when he saw his name on the list.

“It also strengthens my faith,” he said, adding that he would ask the Pope to “pray for refugees”. Francis will



**BANGKOK:** In this photo taken on November 13, 2019, Vietnamese Catholic refugees Ko Sa (front) and Lo Mu (back) sit at home in the outskirts of Bangkok. — AFP

hold two masses and meet with the Catholic community and top officials before jetting on Saturday to Japan, where he will visit Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the sites of the world's only atomic attacks.

Some 50,000 people from Thailand and all over

Southeast Asia are signed up for the Pope's first mass on November 21 in Bangkok. Ko Sa is attending with two relatives, one of whom is her niece Lo Mu, who made the journey to Thailand with her. “Knowing that I'm going to see him, I can't sleep,” Lo Mu said. — AFP

## Rajapaksa likely to reboot China ties

**COLOMBO:** The unfinished, purple-headed Lotus Tower soars uselessly into the Colombo sky, mired in corruption allegations — a project typical of China's misadventures in Sri Lanka under a political dynasty that has just returned to power. With the Rajapaksas clan now back, Beijing will likely be too, experts say.

On Monday Gotabaya Rajapaksa was sworn in as president, almost five years after his brother Mahinda's decade in charge ended in ignominy in 2015 as allegations of corruption and nepotism surfaced. Under Mahinda, who may become prime minister, Sri Lanka secured almost \$7 billion in loans from China, dislodging Japan as Sri Lanka's main funder of infrastructure. But many of the projects have proven to be white elephants, including a \$210-million airport that has no commercial flights.

In 2016 troops had to shoo away deer, wild buffalo and elephants from the site. China also financed a 35,000-seat cricket stadium which seldom hosts matches, a performing arts centre in Colombo with few shows and a misfiring power plant. Some of the money was allocated under Beijing's gargantuan Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) spanning Asia and beyond and aimed at facilitating trade.

Western countries worry that the BRI conceals China's efforts to expand its influence by loaning nations money only to acquire the assets when they cannot repay. Hambantota port in southern Sri Lanka, situated on a key maritime trading route between Europe and Asia, is for critics a prime example. In December 2017, Sri Lanka



**ANURADHAPURA:** Sri Lanka's President-elect Gotabaya Rajapaksa (C) arrives to take the oath of office during his swearing-in ceremony at the Ruwanwelisaya temple.

was forced to hand the port over to China on a 99-year lease after failing to service a \$1.4-billion debt from Beijing to build it.

### Corruption claims

For the Rajapaksas, who together spearheaded the brutal crushing of Tamil separatists in 2009 — with allegedly 40,000 civilians killed — China also came in handy in other ways. “What the Chinese offered to a regime that was being chastised for its human rights record... was international diplomatic protection as well the funds for development,” analyst Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu told AFP. China meanwhile got a potential strategic toehold, right in India's backyard. In 2014, two Chinese submarines docked at Colombo.

### Beijing's orbit

After Mahinda Rajapaksa lost power in 2015, successive governments attempted to fix some of the projects and bring in capital from elsewhere. An agreement with China to build a vast commercial district on reclaimed land off Colombo port was renegotiated, and India is in talks about reviving the moribund airport.

Sri Lanka is also negotiating a fresh military cooperation deal with the United States. But these may now be in danger again with the Rajapaksas back in power. Sri Lanka will again now “pivot more firmly into Beijing's orbit,” Bery said. Financing from elsewhere, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, is available. “(But) China is Sri Lanka's largest investor and creditor, meaning that a close relationship with China is inevitable,” Bery said. Still, said Jeff Smith, research fellow at US think-tank the Heritage Foundation, Gotabaya may have “learned some lessons from his brother's tenure”. This includes “that he recognizes the downside risks... of excessive dependency on China,” Smith said. — AFP

## US walks out of defense cost talks: Seoul

**SEOUL:** The United States walked out of talks on hiking South Korea's contribution for American troops on its soil, Seoul said yesterday, as Washington accused its ally of rebuffing a “fair and equitable” agreement. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly demanded the South pay more towards the costs of the 28,500 troops Washington stations in the South to defend it against the nuclear-armed North.

Seoul officials say Washington is seeking \$5 billion from its treaty partner next year — a fivefold increase — raising concerns the issue will undermine their alliance. The latest round of talks broke down in Seoul yesterday “because the US side walked out first”, said Jeong Eun-bo, the South's chief negotiator. His US counterpart James DeHart said Washington had “cut short” the meeting to give Seoul “some time to reconsider”.

“Unfortunately, the proposals that were put forward by the Korean team were not responsive to our request for fair and equitable burden-sharing,” DeHart told reporters. US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said on a visit to Seoul last week that South Korea was “a wealthy country and could and should pay more to offset the cost of defense”. The Special Measures Agreement (SMA) that governs cost-sharing for American troops in South Korea has been in place since 1991, and in February Seoul agreed to an eight percent contribution increase for this year, to around \$890 million. The head of the South's parliamentary intelligence committee Lee Hye-hoon said in a radio interview that US ambassador Harry Harris had “repeated the demand to pay \$5 billion for defense cost-sharing about 20 times” at a meeting earlier this month. — AFP

## Malaysian gay men caned under Islamic law

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Four Malaysian men have been caned for having gay sex in violation of Islamic laws, with activists yesterday condemning “vicious punishments” they said highlighted a crackdown on the LGBT community. Rights group say there is a worsening climate for gays in the Muslim-majority country, where authorities have maintained a colonial-era ban on sodomy and mete out harsh physical punishments for same-sex relations.

The men, aged 26 to 37, received six strokes of the cane each in a prison outside Kuala Lumpur on Monday for attempting “intercourse against the order of nature”, an offence under sharia law, Amnesty International said. They admitted committing the offence in an apartment last year, with an Islamic court also fining the men and sentencing them to jail terms of up to seven months each.

Religious authorities found out about the private event by monitoring messages between the men, and then sent a raiding party of 50 officers to detain them, according to Amnesty. A fifth man convicted with the others was not caned as he is appealing against the punishment, while a further six men arrested in the apartment raid are still facing charges, the rights group added. “These vicious punishments... are the actual crimes being committed here,” said Shamini Darshni Kaliemuthu, Amnesty's Malaysia executive director.

“Malaysia should be creating an environment in which LGBT people are free from discrimination, not ensnaring and beating innocent people.” Gay rights activist Numan Afifi, who has been following the case, confirmed the men were caned. AFP could not immediately contact court officials or the men's lawyers. Malaysia has a dual-track legal system, with sharia courts handling some cases for Muslim citizens. Sodomy is a crime under the country's regular criminal code as well as under Islamic law. — AFP

## Gunmen ambush Burundian soldiers: Defense ministry

**NAIROBI:** Burundian soldiers were attacked in a night jungle ambush near the border with Rwanda, Burundi's defense ministry said, with military sources yesterday reporting at least eight soldiers' deaths. Dozens more soldiers were missing in the ambush on their base, one of largest and deadliest attacks for several years, senior army officers said yesterday, speaking on condition of anonymity. “A group armed with rifles from Rwanda attacked a position of Burundian soldiers on Mount Twinyoni,” defense ministry spokesman Major Emmanuel Gahongano said on state television on Monday. “This armed group has withdrawn to Rwanda.” He did not give details of casualties or the identity of the attackers. Burundi has been in crisis since President Pierre Nkurunziza defied constitutional limits to seek a third term in office, winning re-election in 2015.

Burundi has repeatedly accused neighboring Rwanda of supporting rebel groups in its territory, a claim Kigali denies. Rwanda on Tuesday denied any role in the attack. “It is not true that the attacks were made from people who came from Rwanda,” Olivier Nduhungirehe, State Minister for Regional Affairs, told AFP. “These are unfounded allegations being made from Burundi — as they have done previously for the last four years. We have other things to do.”

The attack, some 100 kilometers north of the capital Bujumbura, in thick forests 10 kilometers from the Rwandan border, took place in the early hours of Sunday morning. Around 90 soldiers were reported to be in the base before the attack. But when reinforcements arrived hours later, they found only the bodies of eight comrades, including of the company commander, a senior officer told AFP. Later, 15 soldiers were found alive, some of them wounded.

“The rest of the company is still missing,” the officer said. Their fate is unknown. The military source reported that attackers were well-equipped. “Our soldiers were surprised by assailants wearing bullet-proof vests and night-vision goggles, which completely wiped out the position,” the officer said, a report confirmed by two other military sources. “We believe that it is not mere rebels who are responsible for it.” No Burundian armed group has claimed responsibility. — AFP



**DIAMNIADIO:** Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani (L), President of Senegal, Macky Sall (C) and the French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe (R) at the opening of the International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa on November 18, 2019 at the Abdou Diouf Conference Centre. — AFP

## 24 Mali soldiers, 17 jihadists die in clashes in east

**BAMAKO:** Twenty-four Malian soldiers and 17 jihadist fighters were killed in clashes in the east of the country, the army said, as security in the west African nation deteriorates further. Mali and Niger forces were carrying out a joint operation when a patrol was attacked Monday by “terrorists” near the northeastern town of Tabankort, the army said on social media.

According to the military the total toll was “24 dead, 29 injured and material damage” while 17 of the jihadists were killed and a hundred more suspects captured. The prisoners are in the hands of Niger soldiers, the statement said. In an earlier statement, which gave a lower death toll, the army said French and Niger forces took part in a counter-attack. Monday's action was another heavy loss for the army, which lost a hundred soldiers in two jihadist attacks in a month in the autumn. Northern Mali fell into the hands of jihadists in 2012 before the militants were forced out by a French-led military intervention. Since then, however, the

border regions of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso have become the theatre of repeated clashes with jihadist fighters. Mali's army has been struggling to contain the Islamist insurgency despite help from African neighbors, MINUS-MA, the 13,000-strong UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, and former colonial power in the region France.

French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe in a visit to neighboring Senegal on Monday, called on all west African states to help tackle jihadist groups operating in the Sahel. “One thing is certain: jihadist groups will benefit, as soon as they can, from our weaknesses, from our lack of coordination or from our lack of commitment or training,” said Philippe, at the opening of the Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security.

French President Emmanuel Macron has pledged to take decisions “in the coming weeks” on how France can help tackle jihadist violence in the Sahel. He said progress had been made “on the security situation” and decisions would be announced on revamping the G5 regional cooperation force in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. France earlier this month also announced their troops had killed a top jihadist leader in Mali, described by the defense ministry as the second most-wanted terrorist in the Sahel. Moroccan Ali Maychou belonged to the Group to Support Islam and Muslims (GSIM) in Mali, which has claimed responsibility for some of the biggest attacks in the Sahel. — AFP



## Analysis

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## Femicide: A global scourge

Every day in 2017, 137 women and girls were intentionally killed by their partner or a family member somewhere in the world, according to UN statistics. This adds up to over 50,000 women's lives ended by those closest to them, a scourge blamed on deep-rooted gender inequality and damaging stereotypes of women as weaker and less valuable members of society. Here is an overview of the world-wide killings of women, also called femicide.

### The toll

In 2017, some 87,000 women and girls were murdered worldwide, according to a 2018 report of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Of these, 58 percent had their life taken by someone in their inner circle - 30,000 by their spouse or intimate partner, and another 20,000 by a member of their own family. The report showed that men were four times more likely than women to fall victim to homicide (they form 80 percent of all murder victims) but more often than not died at the hands of a stranger.

Fewer than one in five murdered men were killed by their life partner, compared to 82 percent for women. Women in Africa are most likely to be killed by a spouse or family member, with a rate of nearly 70 percent (19,000 murders) compared to 38 percent (3,000 murders) in Europe, the region with the smallest share, said the UNODC. In absolute numbers, Asia had the most severe toll, with 20,000 women killed by a partner or family member in 2017.

### Husbands, fathers, brothers, mothers

The high murder rate among women is a consequence of rampant gender-based violence. Nearly a third of women who have been in a relationship reported having experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of their partner, or a non-partner, according to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO). "Many of the victims of 'femicide' are killed by their current and former partners, but they are also killed by fathers, brothers, mothers, sisters and other family members because of their role and status as women," said the UNODC. These killings, it added, do "not usually result from random or spontaneous acts, but rather from the culmination of prior gender-based violence. Jealousy and fear of abandonment are among the motives". The WHO report also blamed "unequal power of women relative to men" and the "normative use of violence to resolve conflict".

### War

Emergencies such as poverty, war and humanitarian crises make women even more vulnerable. Countries topping a UN-compiled list of "intentional homicides, female" are mostly in Latin America and Africa, regions which struggle with gang and ethnic wars, unemployment and privation. Topping the list is El Salvador with 13.9 out of every 100,000 women murdered in 2017, followed by Jamaica with 11 per 100,000 in the same year.

The Central African Republic was in third place with 10.4 per 100,000 based on 2016 statistics, followed by South Africa with 9.1 per 100,000 in 2011. The real numbers are likely to be higher, with reports based on whatever data is gathered by national statistical systems - severely lacking in many countries in Africa and Asia. Many wars, from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi to Kosovo and Iraq, are known for the tactic of targeting women, who are raped, beaten, taken as sex slaves, and often killed, as a "weapon of war".

### Family

According to the UN, some 1,000 of the 5,000 so-called "honor killings" reported around the world every year, are committed in India. These are crimes committed by close relatives after a woman or girl is deemed to have deviated from religious or traditional mores and values - often for falling in love with a man from the wrong family, or for engaging in sex before marriage. They are shot, stoned, burned, buried alive, strangled, smothered, or stabbed to death with what the UN describes as "horrifying regularity", often in countries where the laws exempt the perpetrators from punishment. Pakistan sees hundreds of these killings every year, while in Afghanistan 243 cases were recorded between April 2011 and August 2013.

Spain is hailed in some quarters for turning the tide in the battle against femicide through a 2004 law against gender-targeted violence that sought to address the problem in different spheres simultaneously - social, educational and correctional. About 100 special courts and police units were also set up. Last year, 50 women were murdered in Spain, and 51 so far this year, down from 71 in 2003. Activists say the number is still too high in a country where judges are accused of bungling cases involving violence against women. Last month, a court caused widespread anger by convicting five men accused of gang-raping a teenager of a lesser charge of sexual abuse on the grounds that she did not fight back. — AFP

All articles appearing on this page are the personal opinion of the writers. Kuwait Times takes no responsibility for views expressed therein.



People march to pay tribute to Sylvia, who was killed by her husband, in Oberhoffen-sur-Moder in eastern France on Nov 17, 2019. — AFP

## Women killed by partners: Confronting the horror

On April 22, a barge picked up the body of a woman stuffed into a suitcase floating in the Oise River in Neuville north of Paris. The woman was Marie-Alice, 53, a consultant who investigators believe was killed by her partner and her body then disposed of with the help of his son. She is one of 115 women murdered in France so far this year by their husband, partner or ex-partner in femicides, according to an AFP investigation, a number which shows the scale of the problem after 121 were killed in the country last year.

Looking into figures from a French collective called Femicides by Partners or Exes, AFP correspondents across France have examined every killing of a woman by their partner in the country this year, speaking to investigators and relatives. The research paints a troubling picture, with the authorities frequently aware of a problem before the crime is committed and loved ones sometimes pained by the knowledge that tragedy could have been averted.

One woman is killed in France every three days by their partner or ex-partner, while marital violence affects 220,000 Frenchwomen every year. "Our system is not working to protect these women," said Justice Minister Nicole Belloubet. The killings in France are part of a global scourge that shows no signs of abating, with 87,000 women and girls killed in 2017 according to the UN, over half of them killed either by their spouse, partner or own family.

### 'Toxic relationship'

Marie-Alice had been living in a damaging relationship where violence always lurked beneath the surface with her partner of 15 years, Luciano, relatives told AFP. Two weeks after her body was found, Luciano, who was on the run, died after being hit by a lorry in Italy. His son, who has been charged in the Marie-Alice case, confessed to helping hide the body, saying his father called him to say he had "done something stupid".

"It was a toxic relationship," said Marie-Alice's sister, Helene de Ponsay, who has now become deputy president of the National Union for Families of Femicide Victims (UNFF). She recalled her sister experiencing panic attacks as the couple had rowed at home after she had forgotten to buy bread. "My wish is that we understand that psychological violence is always super alarming as it can lead to physical violence and can lead to death," she said.

The first three victims in France this year lost their lives on the same day, Jan 6. In Toulouse, Monica, 29, was killed by her partner Felisberto who accused her of cheating on him, and killed her while their daughter was in her room. In the Yvelines region, Pascale, 56, argued with her husband Robert, 69, who killed her with multiple gunshots.

And Taina, 20, was found under a bridge in Seine-et-Marne after being battered to death with iron bars by Jonathan, a 21-year-old-soldier, with whom she was in the process of splitting up. In addition to the 115 cases where investigators believe women were killed by their partner or ex-partner this year, probes are continuing into a dozen other cases where it remains a possibility.

### 'Chain not working'

According to a report published Sunday by France's justice ministry based on 88 cases of marital violence, murders or attempted killings of spouses or partners, the judicial or police authorities were aware of problems between the couple in 65 percent of the cases. And in 41 percent of cases, the victim themselves had already been in touch with the authorities. "It is absolutely clear that this is not okay. The penal chain is not working," said Belloubet.

Stephanie, 39, a teacher from the region of Tours, had sought a restriction order against her ex-partner Jean-Michel whose harassment had even reached the extent of living in an apartment in the same block as her. On the night of March 31, she sent a message to a friend that a

seeing," said Cape Town student activist Zimasa Mpmemyama. The killing was a turning point "regarding our collective responsibility to end violence, particularly against women," says the country's former ombudswoman, Thuli Madonsela.

### Protests

Hashtags #AmINext and #MenAreTrash became the rallying point to voice anger about violence against women. Twitter accounts came digital support groups for survivors, with some even naming their alleged abusers. Thousands took part in rallies. Blood-stained sheets and clothing were laid out in front of Johannesburg's stock exchange to demand for more support from businesses and banks. On Oct 14, police, previously accused of indifferent handling of sexual assault cases, marched in their hundreds in the capital Pretoria to protest at violence against women.

Deputy National Commissioner Bonang Mgwanya called it a "state of emergency". The Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, visited a site dedicated to Mrwetyana and tied a yellow ribbon in solidarity with all victims of gender-based violence and femicide. In a hard-hitting speech to parliament, President Cyril Ramaphosa declared South Africa was one of "the most unsafe places in the world to be a woman". He named gender-based violence a "national crisis" and vowed to crack down on perpetrators. His cabinet has allocated 1.6 billion rand

man was trying to force open the door of her apartment. She knew it was Jean-Michel and called the police. "We don't go out for that, madam," she was told.

The next day, Stephanie was found strangled to death in her home. Jean-Michel then returned to his own place and killed himself. According to the findings of the AFP investigation, separation was the main motive of the murders, counting for over 23 percent of cases, followed by arguments and then jealousy. Some 32 percent of the killings were carried out with firearms, with knives also counting for an identical proportion.

Blows to the body and strangling counted for 18 and 16 percent respectively, the investigation found. And, as with the ex-partner of Stephanie, a high proportion of the murders - some 41 percent - ended with the assailant seeking to commit suicide or killing themselves.

### 'It's men who kill'

Marital violence also affects men, and in 2018, 28 men were killed by their partner or ex-partner. In many of these cases, the man had committed acts of violence against his partner. Activists say police need to step up their response to emergency situations but also emphasize more needs to be done to monitor, restrain and also help men with violent tendencies. The elderly are not spared either, with several cases involving the over 70s. "It's not the failings of police that kill women. It's men," said Sandrine Bouchait, president of the UNFF. Recurring patterns include crimes committed by men with a history of violence, as well as killings that come after rows over custody of children following a separation. In October 2018, in Ile-Rousse in Corsica, Julie Douib, 35, left Bruno, 42, the father of their two children and they took turns in child-care. Those close to her say he beat her and demeaned her psychologically. "He always told her 'you don't have a brain, you are mine'" said her father Lucien. On March 3, Bruno went to her house and shot her dead. — AFP

## Brutal murder triggers S Africa's wakeup to gender violence

Eventually, it all became too much. Apathy became transformed into outrage. And little by little, a national campaign for change took hold. For years, South Africa's awful reputation for the murder and rape of women had gone unchallenged by many of its citizens. Consider this: Every three hours, a woman in South Africa is killed, a rate that is five times the world average. Half of all women murder victims are killed by men with whom they had a close relationship. And each day, more than a hundred women are raped - an estimate as horrifying as it is conservative, experts say.

But the veil of indifference to this suffering was ripped aside last August, after the death of a 19-year-old student. Her killer, a post office employee, lured Cape Town university student Uyinene Mrwetyana to his workplace and raped her before bludgeoning her to death with a measuring scale. He then dumped her body in a shallow hole and burnt it. Grief, then anger, ensued. "The murder of Uyinene sparked much of the conversation we are

feminist far-right party Vox, which has made the repeal of this law one of its top priorities. Under the law, introduced by a previous Socialist government, victims of gender violence are entitled to free legal aid. Special courts were established, and public prosecutors can press charges even if the victim does not file a complaint. The law also enables authorities to require men convicted of violence against their ex-wives and girlfriends to wear electronic bracelets that send a signal to police if they approach their victims.

### 'False' accusations

It had the support of over 80 percent of the population, said Marisa Soletto, the head of the pro-equality Women's Foundation. "We would not have achieved half of what we did if the far right was at the level it is now," she said. In 2017, Spain's parliament unanimously passed a series of measures designed to bolster the original law, which came with a five-year budget of one billion euros (\$1.1 billion).

And since 2003 the government has kept a tally of the number of women murdered at the hands of a partner or former partner. After each murder, Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez sends a tweet condemning it. But Vox, which entered parliament for the first time in April and surged to third place in the assembly in a repeat election on Nov 10, argues that the gender violence law "discriminates" against men and encourages "false" accusations of

(\$108 million) for a six-month plan. Mrwetyana's murderer was last week given a record three life sentences after an unusually fast-tracked trial and conviction in a country where the legal system is sluggish and inefficient. State broadcaster SABC two weeks ago launched a television talk show, "The Orange Couch", where it invites survivors to share their stories and to "inspire" women in tricky situations "to find their own strength to break the chains" of dangerous relationships.

Miss South Africa, Zozibini Tunzi, has invited men to send her messages of love for women. She will then incorporate the messages in ribbons as part of her costume for the upcoming Miss Universe pageant, the goal being to encourage "conversation around gender-based violence". S'We are starting to see also a very vocal new generation of activists who are expressing anger in ways that are distinct for this time," Pumla Gqola, an academic and author of "Rape: A South African Nightmare", told AFP. Catherine Burns, a history professor at the University of Pretoria, said: "The problem has been with us for a while but there is a definite shift in response, particularly from young women. You see this shift... in the fear and the caution of some men in public, the slightly different way they feel they have to speak."

Some wonder how far the rise against sexist violence will last in a country facing huge economic and social ills. "There are moments of highs when everyone talks about it," Mpmemyama said. — AFP

abuse. It wants the law replaced with legislation providing "equal protection" for men, women, children and the elderly in cases of domestic violence. Vox also calls for the removal of abortion from government-funded health centers and an end to public subsidies for what it calls "radical" feminist organizations.

### 'Biggest danger'

Such positions are not seen in other far-right parties in western Europe such as France or Italy, Soletto said. "We must go to Poland to find something a little like it," she added. Vox's stance has also pushed the main opposition conservative Popular Party (PP) further to the right on the issue amid fears of losing votes to the hard-right party. "The biggest danger with Vox is that its discourse might be legitimized by the right," said Maria Silvestre, a sociology professor at the University of Deusto in Bilbao.

While the PP defends the achievements of the fight against violence against women, "its discourse has hardened in the face of Vox's one-upmanship", said feminist journalist Ana Bernal. PP leader Pablo Casado has called for all victims of violence to be protected "no matter what their gender or age". And in a March interview with the monthly women's magazine Telva, he said: "We should not fall for what the left says of protecting women more and more. What should we do, escort them in the streets?" — AFP



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**13** No recession, oil stable in 2020: Financial expert



**14** India may extend onion export ban to cap domestic prices



DUBAI: A General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon is pictured at the Dubai Airshow. —AFP

# Qantas challenges Airbus, Boeing on ultra-long haul jets

## Manufacturers asked to ‘sharpen their pencils’

**SYDNEY:** Qantas has asked Airbus and Boeing for a better deal on planes capable of non-stop Sydney-London flights before deciding whether to place an order. “We asked them to go back and re-look at that to sharpen their pencils because there still was a gap there,” Qantas International Chief Executive Tino La Spina told an investor briefing yesterday after Qantas outlined plans for capital spending to average A\$2 billion (\$1.36 billion) a year.

The Australian airline is considering launching the world’s longest non-stop flights because it sees demand for time-poor travelers willing to pay a premium to cut out stop-overs. Qantas is looking to replace its ageing fleet over the medium term and said it expected capacity growth in the domestic market to be near-flat in the current half.

On its non-stop Perth-London route, it is achieving a 30% fare premium in business and premium economy over one-stop flights from rivals, La Spina said. “That surprised us, just how much people valued direct flying,” he said. In addition to Sydney-London flights, the fleet of Airbus A350-1000 or Boeing 777-8 jets under consideration could also fly Melbourne-London and from Sydney and Melbourne to New York and Chicago, La Spina said. Qantas is examining an initial order for 12 planes, a source familiar with the matter, who was not authorized to speak with media, told Reuters.

La Spina and Chief Executive Alan Joyce declined to be drawn on exact numbers during the briefing. “You have to have a big enough sized fleet to make the economics work,” Joyce said. Last week, following a London-Sydney test flight, he said Qantas would decide by the end of the year whether to proceed with plans for ultra-long haul flights and could place an order for planes early next year. Citi analysts in July forecast non-stop flights from Sydney to London and New York could add A\$180 million annually to the carrier’s profit before tax, which was A\$1.3 billion in the financial year ended June 30.

### Boost for Boeing

In another development, Boeing’s troubled 737 MAX

aircraft gained another boost yesterday as Kazakh flag carrier Air Astana said it planned to buy 30 of the planes, which were grounded in March. Air Astana said it had signed a “letter of intent” to buy 30 of the 737 MAX-8 model, with the order to be finalised in the coming months. Boeing said the planes would “serve as the backbone” of Air Astana’s new low-cost carrier FlyArystan.

On Monday, Boeing announced at the Dubai Airshow it had sold 10 of the aircraft to Turkey’s SunExpress, in the first firm order since the 737 MAX was taken out of service after two crashes that left a total of 346 people dead. Before this week’s sales, the last commercial landmark for the troubled model was in June when Boeing secured a letter of intent from British Airways parent IAG to buy 200 of the planes. The grounding of the 737 MAX has dragged on far beyond initial expectations as Boeing had to upgrade systems and faced tough questions from regulators and politicians.

The crisis is one of the most serious in the US manufacturer’s 103-year history, and has already cost it tens of billions of dollars, amid multiple investigations by US authorities and complaints from victims’ families. SunExpress said its purchase was in addition to a previous order for 32 of the aircraft. “We have full confidence that Boeing will deliver us a safe, reliable and efficient aircraft,” the airline’s CEO Jens Bischof said. “However, it goes without saying that this requires the undisputed airworthiness of the model, granted by all relevant authorities.”

### Under scrutiny

Boeing’s embattled CEO Dennis Muilenburg faced a grilling from US lawmakers in late October. Many of the questions focused on the Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System, an automated system that the pilots of the doomed Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines planes were unable to control, resulting in crashes.

Boeing’s entire global fleet of almost 400 MAX planes has stayed out of service ever since. Its conduct during the

secured \$10.5 million this month from investors to bolster the business.

“Through our platform, they can meet foreign buyers more easily ... prices will improve and that gives bigger benefits to both farmers and their employees,” the 42-year-old told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Tridge users include the world’s largest retailer Walmart Inc and French supermarket chain Carrefour, said Shin. Globally, consumers and retailers are demanding more information about the goods they source, buy and eat, to make sure their production and transportation does not damage the environment, or use illegal and unethical business practices.

In response, manufacturers of household brands, restaurants and other businesses are seeking to attract more customers by offering products guaranteed free of deforestation or slave labor, for example. Earlier this year, conservation group WWF launched a website that harnesses blockchain technology allowing users to scan a QR code on a product or menu revealing its full history and supply chain. Seoul-based Tridge makes use of artificial intelligence, data and algorithms, and has about 80 employees in 40 countries verifying that suppliers



DUBAI: United Arab Emirates’ air force Aerobatic Team, Al-Fursan, performs stunts at the Dubai Airshow. —AFP

development of the MAX has come under scrutiny, particularly on the question of whether it cut corners to launch the MAX quickly. Analysts said the deal gave some welcome backing for Boeing after the future of the model was put in doubt. “The SunExpress deal may only have been for 10 aircraft - and firming options at that - but it was very important for Boeing to get some more public support for the MAX,” said Dominic Perry from Flyglobal.

At the Dubai Airshow this week however it has been Airbus which has secured the big-ticket sales, with \$30 billion worth of orders of its A320 and A350 aircraft announced on Monday. Emirates Airline became a blue-chip customer for the wide-body A350 jet, and Air Arabia - based in the United Arab Emirates — tripled its all-Airbus fleet as it pursues an expansion plan. Yesterday, Air Senegal said it had signed a memorandum of understanding to purchase eight of the new A220 - the single-aisle aircraft formerly known as the Bombardier C Series jet. —Agencies

are trustworthy and ethical.

Food sellers on the platform, who are based in about 150 countries, can cut out middlemen and traders along the supply chain, who often take a cut and push up prices. “The buyers get cheaper sourcing, and the supplier can get a better selling price,” said Shin. Once linked, producers and their customers - which include large and small retailers, importers, manufacturers and caterers - can conduct business away from the website, with suppliers paying Tridge for the connection. The online platform, whose main rival is China’s Alibaba Group, has more than 1,000 food products, 60,000 suppliers and 40,000 buyers.

Last year, purchase requests totalled about \$2 billion, Shin said, with a target of \$10 billion for 2020. “We figured that food and agriculture is the most fragmented industry,” he said, noting the system can match sellers to buyers’ specifications “within one second”. David Dawe, a senior economist at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in Bangkok, said ethical and sustainable food supply chains often incur extra costs, making it hard for them to be competitive. “Use of new digital technologies can counteract those additional costs, helping such businesses to survive and grow their market share,” he added. —Reuters

## In desert dunes, electro fans rave about tourism

**ONG JMAL:** Bass rhythms boom out across the Tunisian Sahara toward a herd of camels, lasers splash colors across the dunes and VIPs sip vodka in what was once a “Star Wars” movie set. The Dunes Electronique music festival, launched in 2014, was revived last weekend on the set where US director George Lucas created the desert planet of Tatooine. The festival marked a joyous and noisy comeback after a three-year silence following several deadly jihadist attacks in the North African country which also badly hit its tourism sector.

In a sign of the growing appeal of the remote Saharan region and its other-worldly landscapes, more than 20 international and local DJs and thousands of revellers converged on the desert site of Ong Jmal in southwest Tunisia for the two-day extravaganza. “We had already visited Tunis, but this time we came all the way here for the festival,” said Leopold Poignant, a 22-year-old student from Paris who planned to also visit the nearby oasis town of Tozeur after the party.

He said they were drawn by DJs like Adam Port and Konstantin Sibold, “but we’ve also come for the experience. This is a Star Wars setting, and partying in the dunes is really something.” The event was held around the circular constructions built 20 years ago as settings for the Star Wars space-opera. Ong Jmal is the best known of several sites in Tunisia where Lucas shot scenes of the youth of his hero Luke Skywalker. Each year, tens of thousands of tourists walk through the sand-swept set taking selfies.

### Nomadic tents, campfires

As music played non-stop for 30 hours, those not dancing were huddled in nomadic tents set up as “chill zones” or, given the very real night-time desert chill, around camp fires. Most of the 5,000 revellers were Tunisians, some of whom had never visited the area before. “I’m a city girl, I don’t like these traditional areas, but now there are many events in the south so I ended up coming,” said Zoubeida. Army and police were deployed around the party site, located less than 40 kilometers from the Algerian border.

The 2011 revolution which toppled longtime autocrat Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the jihadist attacks that killed dozens of tourists in 2015 dealt a heavy blow to Tunisia’s vital tourism sector. Although the south was not directly targeted in the attacks, visits to the region have dwindled to mostly one-night outings from coastal resorts. “The biggest number of tourists now are Russians, and they only buy water on their way to the desert,” said Nagga Ramzi, a shopkeeper with Kohl-lined eyes. “It’s hard. There’s nothing here but dates... and tourism.” —AFP

## Investors back global online market-place for ethical, green farmers

**KUALA LUMPUR:** A former investment banker has raised more than \$10 million to expand a startup that helps developing-nation farmers who are using green and ethical methods to earn more by linking them directly with food buyers around the world. After a decade investing in commodity markets at Deutsche Bank and Korea Investment Corporation, Hoshik Shin set up online marketplace Tridge in 2015 to build a network of sustainable producers and link them to buyers at home and abroad.

Food sold on Tridge includes peppermint leaves from Egypt, peanuts farmed in Nigeria and mangoes grown in India and Thailand. “At the moment, suppliers in emerging countries are so restricted to just meeting local buyers,” said the South Korean entrepreneur, whose venture



Business

# Shares push to a 22-month high as trade hopes endure

## MSCI world index touches highest since Jan 2018

**LONDON:** World shares touched their highest in nearly two years yesterday as investors maintained bets that the United States and China can reach a deal to end their damaging trade war. The world's two largest economies are in talks on an initial deal to end an 18-month trade dispute that has damaged supply chains and upset global markets, with Washington due to impose a new round of tariffs on Chinese goods from Dec 15. A lack of clear news on the progress of talks has not deterred investors emboldened by a growing sense that risks of a recession, a spectre through the year, have receded.

Looser monetary policy from major central banks like China has also helped bolster expectations for equities. The MSCI world equity index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, gained 0.1% to touch its highest since January last year. European shares also moved up, with the broad Euro STOXX 600 adding 0.4% to move to its highest since July 2015. Indexes in Frankfurt and London gained 0.4% and 0.5% respectively.

Wall Street futures indicated a positive start, too, adding 0.2%. Investors said assumptions that an initial trade deal would be reached had outweighed any creeping doubts on progress in talks that stemmed from a lack of clear news, with a growing sense of positive economic fundamentals ahead. "Consensus is assuming that there will be a cyclical upturn," StEphane Barbier de la Serre, a strategist at Makor Capital Markets. "It's like the market lowered its guard on the big risk metrics-and that has triggered a reweighting of funds from bonds to equities."

Hopes that Beijing will deliver some economic stimulus in addition to Monday's surprise cut to a closely watched lending rate provided a boost to sentiment in Asian markets. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan rose 0.6%, with Shanghai blue chips gaining 1%

and Hong Kong's Hang Seng up 1.4%. On the trade front, CNBC had overnight reported the mood in Beijing was pessimistic about prospects of sealing a trade agreement with the United States, buffeting the dollar.

But signs that suggested growing detente between the sides clouded the picture: a new extension granted by Washington to let US companies keep doing business with Chinese telecoms giant Huawei suggested a possible olive branch. That lack of clarity did unnerve some investors. "The longer we go on, the more concerns will arise. The reality is the clock is ticking," said Michael McCarthy, chief market strategist at brokerage CMC Markets in Sydney.

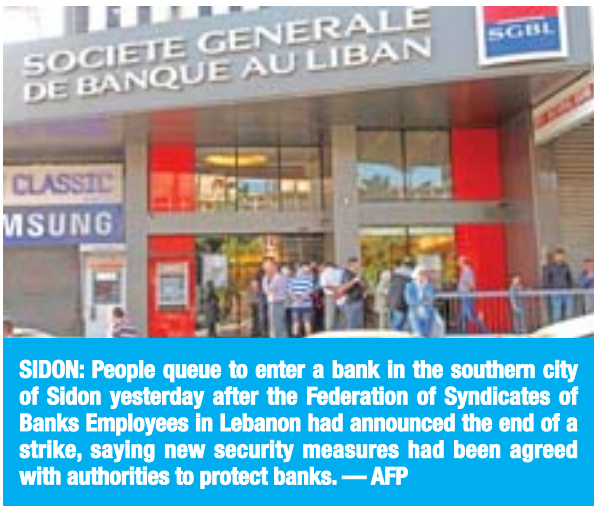
**Dollar stabilizes**

The listless mood in share markets was reflected by tepid moves among major currencies. The dollar stabilized against a broad basket of other currencies yesterday after three consecutive days of losses, with investors awaiting the release of the minutes of the US central bank meeting at end-October when policymakers had cut interest rates. The dollar index against six major currencies was little changed at 97.807, close to a two-week low after weakening 0.6% in the last three days.

"Trade headlines are dominating sentiment but in terms of the key event risk, the release of the Fed minutes will be a big one for market participants," said Morten Lund, a senior FX strategist at Nordea. The British pound settled at \$1.2953 after hitting a one-month high overnight as opinion polls showed Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party on course for victory at the Dec 12 election. In commodities, crude futures fell, losing 0.2% to \$62.29 a barrel, with a combination of jitters over trade and expectations of a rise in US inventories jangling nerves. — Reuters



JAKARTA: An Indonesian woman rides her bike to a traditional market in Jakarta yesterday. — AFP



SIDON: People queue to enter a bank in the southern city of Sidon yesterday after the Federation of Syndicates of Banks Employees in Lebanon had announced the end of a strike, saying new security measures had been agreed with authorities to protect banks. — AFP

## Queues build at Lebanese banks

**BEIRUT:** Queues built as Lebanese banks reopened yesterday after a one-week closure, with police deployed at branches and banks imposing tight restrictions on hard currency withdrawals and transfers abroad. Banks have mostly been closed since protests erupted against Lebanon's ruling elite on Oct 17. They reopened after a two-week closure on Nov 1, but shut again a week later because of a strike by staff who complained of intimidation from clients demanding their cash.

Seeking to avoid capital flight, the Association of Banks in Lebanon announced on Sunday that cash withdrawals would be limited to \$1,000 a week and transfers abroad would be restricted to urgent personal spending only. The central bank has said deposits are safe and that it has the capacity to maintain the value of the Lebanese pound, which is pegged to the US dollar. In Beirut's Hamra area, around 50 people were waiting at a branch of Blom Bank shortly after it opened, a witness said.

In the Sodeco area of the capital, about 20 people each were waiting at another branch of Blom Bank and at a branch of Bank Audi, a witness said. "Everyone has a lack of trust, there's a state of panic, and people's feelings are justifiable because no one is giving them any trust," said a customer at the bank, who declined to give his name. In the southern city of Sidon, around 50 people were waiting at a branch of Blom Bank ahead of opening, a witness said. — Reuters

## German industry sees deep slump

**FRANKFURT AM MAIN:** Germany's powerful BDI industry federation said yesterday that manufacturing firms are in a deep recession, forecasting that output will fall by four percent year-on-year in 2019. "After six years of growth, German industry has been in a recession since the third quarter of 2018," BDI director Joachim Lang said.

Industrial output is falling around the world, the industry body noted, while growth in German exports is expected to fall from 2.1 percent last year to 0.5 percent this year - its slowest pace since 2009. Worldwide, exports are expected to fall by 0.5 percent this year, the BDI said citing a Dutch government study. German industry is struggling both with political developments, including the US' trade wars with China and the European Union, and with

structural changes like the vital car industry's adjustment to building electric and hybrid vehicles. In the first nine months of 2019, car production fell more than 10 percent - "resulting from weak global demand and the structural transformation in the auto industry," the BDI said. But while industry is struggling, strong services firms, growing wages and higher state and household consumption are helping keep the German economy growing. Berlin forecasts expansion of 0.5 percent this year and 1.0 percent in 2020, while the government is pumping some of its billions in budget surpluses into higher spending and new green policies.

Already-announced investment increases from Berlin have not satisfied the BDI, who see more room for government action. On Monday, a rare alliance of the BDI with the DGB trade union federation called for "at least 450 billion euros" (\$498 billion) of government investment over the coming decade. The cash should go towards tackling "the causes of weak growth," BDI president Dieter Kempf said. Such massive outlays would mean abandoning a longstanding no-new-debt policy under Chancellor Angela Merkel. — AFP

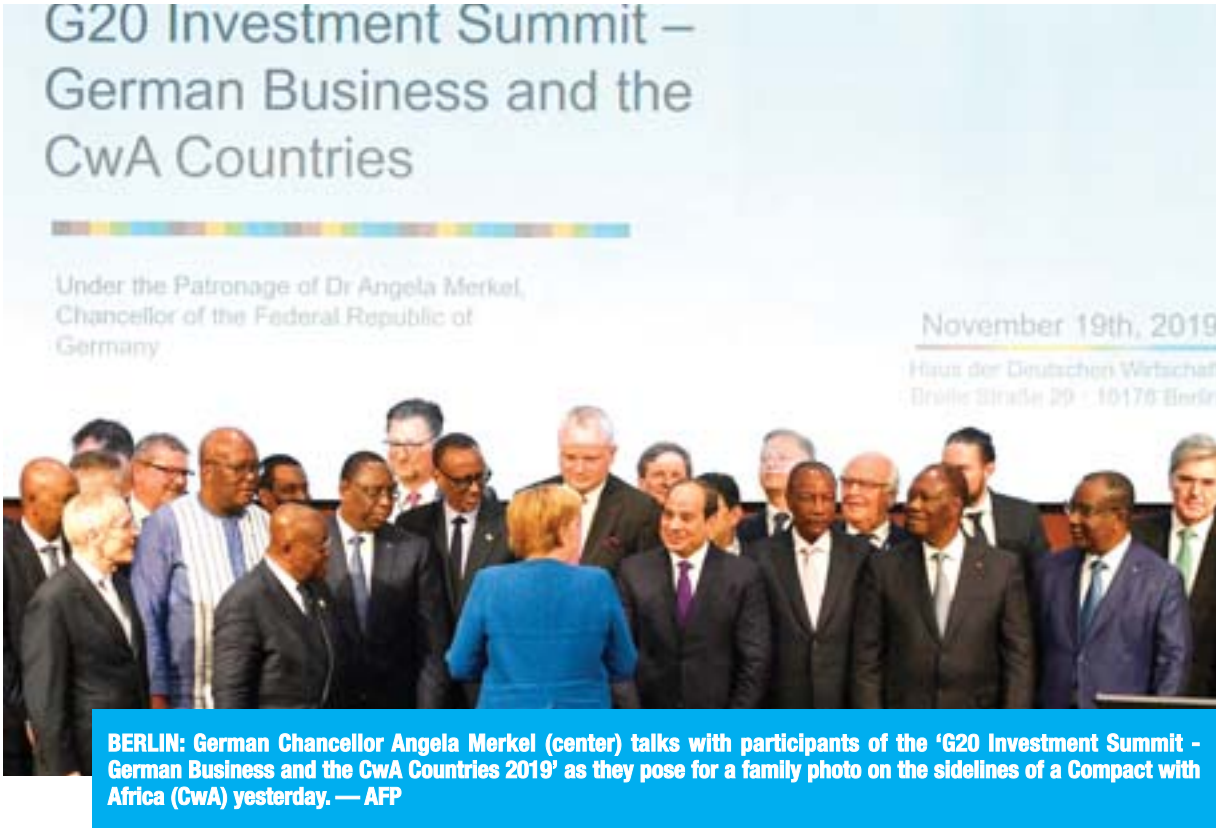
## Demand for Europe debt holds as trade deal hopes fade

**LONDON:** Euro zone bond yields were flat yesterday, with gains limited by prolonged trade war uncertainty and a third day of heightened political unrest in Hong Kong. The German 10-year Bund yield was up less than half a basis point at -0.329%. French 10-year yields were similarly muted, recovering only slightly from last week, when Germany and France recorded the biggest declines in borrowing costs since September. Spanish and Italian yields were lower, with the Italian 10-year yield hovering around 1.29% in early London trading.

"Profit-taking into year-end seems the dominant theme, and particularly foreign investors should be reluctant to recommit in the face of increasing political uncertainty in Spain as well as Italy," Commerzbank strategists wrote in a note to clients. Trade tensions have also dominated sentiment in recent days. Market positioning means bond yields are especially receptive to positive trade-war developments, said Lyn Graham-Taylor, a fixed income strategist at Rabobank.

The next round of US tariffs on Chinese goods takes effect on Dec 15. Hopes for a trade deal are diminishing amid reports the United States is reluctant to roll back existing tariffs. But in a positive sign for US-China relations, the United States offered Huawei a 90-day license extension. "The market has been trading trade-related headlines asymmetrically for quite a long time. If it's vaguely ambiguous or slightly positive it will be traded in quite a positive fashion - yields will sell off," Graham-Taylor said.

Economic data will be sparse. Italian industrial orders data for September are due at 900 GMT and euro area construction output data at 1000 GMT. Minutes from the October meeting the Federal Reserve's federal open markets committee are due on Wednesday and the new president of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde, will speak in Frankfurt on Friday. Euro zone PMI data are also due on Friday. — Reuters



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (center) talks with participants of the 'G20 Investment Summit - German Business and the CwA Countries 2019' as they pose for a family photo on the sidelines of a Compact with Africa (CwA) yesterday. — AFP

### EXCHANGE RATES

#### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

##### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar/Transfer	304.300
Euro	338.690
Sterling Pound	396.050
Canadian dollar	231.320
Turkish lira	53.570
Swiss Franc	309.090
US Dollar Buying	296.850

##### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.802
Indian Rupees	4.241
Pakistani Rupees	1.975
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.694
Nepali Rupees	2.640
Singapore Dollar	224.580
Hongkong Dollar	38.864
Bangladesh Taka	3.541
Philippine Peso	6.005
Thai Baht	10.098
Malaysian ringgit	77.826

##### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.201
Qatari Riyal	83.633
Omani Riyal	790.903
Bahraini Dinar	808.560
UAE Dirham	82.904

##### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.400
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.895

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.222
Tunisian Dinar	111.060
Jordanian Dinar	429.530
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.167

#### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

##### Rate for Transfr

##### Selling Rate

US Dollar	303.940
Canadian Dollar	230.850
Sterling Pound	395.190
Euro	338.175
Swiss Frank	303.510
Bahrain Dinar	808.290
UAE Dirhams	83.155
Qatari Riyals	84.390
Saudi Riyals	81.945
Jordanian Dinar	429.975
Egyptian Pound	18.873
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.695
Indian Rupees	4.230
Pakistani Rupees	1.959
Bangladesh Taka	3.534
Philippines Peso	5.898
Cyprus pound	18.085
Japanese Yen	3.795
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.648
Malaysian Ringgit	73.370
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	43.680
Thai Bhat	11.060

Turkish Lira	53.385
Singapore dollars	223.191

#### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

##### CURRENCY

##### BUY

##### SELL

British Pound	0.386873	0.400683
Czech Korune	0.005161	0.014461
Danish Krone	0.041017	0.046017
Euro	0.329267	0.342967
Georgian Lari	0.121440	0.121440
Hungarian	0.001147	0.001337
Norwegian Krone	0.029334	0.034534
Romanian Leu	0.065204	0.082054
Russian ruble	0.004781	0.004781
Slovakia	0.009095	0.019095
Swedish Krona	0.027534	0.032534
Swiss Franc	0.300698	0.311698

Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.198327	0.210327
New Zealand Dollar	0.188061	0.197561

America		
Canadian Dollar	0.224896	0.233896
US Dollars	0.300200	0.305500
US Dollars Mint	0.300700	0.305500

Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.002998	0.003799

Chinese Yuan	0.041902	0.045402
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036923	0.039673
Indian Rupee	0.003628	0.004400
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002019	0.002899
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.069422	0.075422
Nepalese Rupee	0.002624	0.002964
Pakistan Rupee	0.001294	0.002064
Philippine Peso	0.005842	0.006142
Singapore Dollar	0.218367	0.228367
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001318	0.001898
Taiwan	0.010020	0.010200
Thai Baht	0.009733	0.010283
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.801012	0.809066
Egyptian Pound	0.018629	0.021370
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
Jordanian Dinar	0.432210	0.432210
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021180	0.045180
Omani Riyal	0.785261	0.793156
Qatar Riyal	0.082928	0.083762
Saudi Riyal	0.080060	0.081360
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.102947	0.110947
Turkish Lira	0.046263	0.056108
UAE Dirhams	0.082217	0.083043
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069



## Business

# No recession, oil stable in 2020: Financial expert

## Investors and businesses fearful of recession

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** The future of the global economy is a key concern on everyone's mind these days. Investors and businesses across the region and the world are watching the slowdown, fearful of a recession. Kuwait Times spoke with Arnab Das, Global Market Strategist at Invesco, for insight on what to expect and how major economies and key commodities like oil can be expected to perform this coming year.

**Kuwait Times:** What are your expectations for the global economy for 2020? Will there be a recession or a significant slowdown in global growth?

**Arnab Das:** We already have had a significant slowdown in global growth this year, partly due to the trade war and partly due to the effects of the Fed raising interest rates previously. Our outlook for 2020 is constructive. We are not expecting a US or global recession. We just did the forecast round for next year, and we came to a conclusion of about three percent growth.

So our view is that major economies within the global economy are stabilizing, because the Fed has shifted gears from raising rates to lowering them. It has eased monetary policy, and following the Fed the ECB and many central banks around the world including big and small ones are cutting rates as well. That should put a floor under the manufacturing sector and stock markets, and help people feel better and make them more willing to spend.

In addition, trade tensions between the US and China in particular appear to be stabilizing. The tension between the UK and EU and Brexit is not over, but is improving a bit. It seems unlikely that we will get a hard Brexit or a no-deal Brexit. The deadline was pushed back to January due to early elections, which will probably be pushed back again, so we will have a transition rather than a hard Brexit. We don't expect a strong rebound, nor do we expect a global or US recession. So it's not a perfect world and it's not a terrible world either - it's a decent world.

**Kuwait Times:** What are your expectations for oil prices for 2020?

**Das:** The current scenario is helpful for oil and commodity producing regions in the world, as it's much better than where we seemed to be heading six months ago. There is no reason why the GCC would be an exception to that. We don't expect a big liftoff in the price of oil as the market is well supplied. There are efforts to cut production in some places. The US' share has become more efficient than it was over a period of many years. Many producers that previously required \$70 or \$80 for a barrel of oil are now profitable at \$50 or \$60. There is no reason to think that the US share will go offline.

A number of oil producers like Russia and others need the fiscal and budgetary revenue and foreign exchange from oil, so they won't cut production. Due to all these things put together, it's reasonable to see

the oil range may be a little higher or lower than where we are now, as it's probably stable. The dollar is important for oil - normally if the dollar goes up, oil prices go down, and vice versa.

**Kuwait Times:** How will this impact the economies of the GCC if there is a recession or slower global growth?

**Das:** Besides the market being very well supplied, we do have a continued slowdown in major oil importers. Despite all these expectations that we are not going to have a recession, this doesn't mean we are not having slowdowns. So the US is decelerating, EU is decelerating, China is decelerating, India is decelerating, and all major oil consumers are slowing down. We don't think they are going into recession, but are decelerating. So the demand for oil will be moderate rather than accelerating sharply. So we expect oil to remain within the range.

From that point of view, it's not a perfect world for the Gulf and not a bad world either. The world looks a bit better than it did a few months ago. There is also a bit of reprieve and lot of tensions in the world because of the US elections. The US president will be more focused on domestic issues than on trade tensions and geopolitics. So we will probably get some formal improvement in the trade relationship between US and China. We have to see after the elections what the new administration looks like, and how that may change the approach of the US to these big questions.

In this region, I see a lot of desire in many places for economic reforms in particular. There is a desire to not just be dependent on oil, but to invest in the rest of the world. Not only in Kuwait but also in Saudi Arabia - it's a general trend in emerging markets as a whole.

**Kuwait Times:** How do you see traditional banks and financial institutions weathering the next recession or global slowdown?

**Das:** Bank stocks have been under a lot of pressure in many parts of the world. In many places, we have negative interest rates including Europe, Japan and others, which have been very bad for banks. Banks have already been hit very hard. But bank stocks have come back significantly in many parts of the world, which is another indicator and good reason to say that the world and US economy in particular will avoid a recession, at least in the near term. There are also places where banks haven't been fixed. In the US and UK, the banking sector problem has been addressed, while in Europe and India it hasn't.

We know from the history of banking crises that if we don't fix the problem in the banks, it's going to be a problem for the economy for a long time to come. So Europe and India need to deal with this problem. If the global economy continues to decelerate, then we will have more pressure on banks, just like oil prices.

**Kuwait Times:** What is your take on the impact fin-

tech will have on growth prospects for traditional finance? Do you foresee fintech taking off significantly in the region? In what way or how?

**Das:** Fintech like all other areas of this fourth industrial revolution is clearly very important, and is affecting every walk of life. It is affecting traditional banking institutions, non-banks and asset managers as well. Fintech is a special case of this fourth industrial revolution, which is about big data, artificial intelligence, automation and so on. We don't know how they are going to end up. In the beginning of each previous industrial revolution, the transition was very difficult. For example, for a long time the computers seemed to have no or very little effect.

Fintech to me seems very critical - it already is leading to very important developments like financial inclusion. It's very important for people who have difficulty accessing the formal financial system. They can use it in making payments, opening bank accounts and managing them, and other services. It's a good thing if it's properly managed, and it will be good for the people and the country as a whole. Of course, like anything, there are dangers and risks, but it's a positive development at the end.

**Kuwait Times:** What are the opportunities investors should be looking at for 2020 in Kuwait, in the Gulf, and in the rest of the world?

**Das:** People seeking safety and liquidity is giving way to a bit more appetite for risk and a willingness to invest not just in government bonds, but also in equities. This is good for emerging markets, Kuwait and the GCC as well.

**Kuwait Times:** What are we missing that you think is an interesting or new development in the global financial structure that needs more attention or concern?

**Das:** The opening of the financial system and financial markets in China for foreign investments is very important. There is so much interest that investors and even people from the US are pushing back against the government's position. China wants to open its financial markets and equity capital in the economy. Hopefully, it will continue despite all the tensions. Many countries have significant challenges as they open up, but it's not a reason not to open up. They rather have to deal with the challenges. China needs open financial markets and they understand that.

An important concern is Europe's financial markets, economy and political system. Europe needs more reforms, and needs to unify the banking system and capital market. Instead, there is a lot of debate but not a lot of progress. Some firms there have moved some of their people and operations from London to the EU to protect themselves against Brexit. They are going to different places such as Amsterdam, Paris, Dublin and others, so there is a danger of fragmentation or friction in capital markets and the banking system. So the financial system in Europe will be less efficient.



Arnab Das interviewed by KT journalist.  
— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

**Kuwait Times:** 2018 marked the 10th anniversary of the worst US economic disaster since the Great Depression, reshaping financial markets and the global economy. Today, many of the world's largest banks have recovered their losses in assets and central banks have injected trillions of dollars into the economy. Has the world learned its lesson?

**Das:** I think that much of the world has learned the lesson as there have been a lot of regulations for banks, capital requirements are much higher, and liquidity requirements are much higher too. Credit growth has been much weaker in the developed West in this cycle than in previous cycles. Correspondingly, this is also the reason why inflation has been lower. There is much less leverage in the housing market. The overall growth of debts has slowed down. There is still a very big amount of debt, but the big growth of debt in this cycle came from China and emerging markets rather than from the US or Western Europe. So the overall debt ratios, government debt, corporate debt and household debt in the developed world are more or less stable.

It doesn't feel like we are heading for a major crisis like in 2008 or 2011. It feels like there are pockets where debt has grown very rapidly like corporate US, although it recently stopped. China is dealing with its debt problem as it slowed the growth of its debt significantly and rebalanced the economy to be much less capital-intensive. So the financial stability risks in general are lower than they were 10 years ago.

I think the general story is not the rapid growth of debt, which was the case before the crisis, but the problem of slow growth. So the world has learned its lesson, but it hasn't done its homework of reducing debt.

## IMF: Public sector reforms for better governance

**KUWAIT:** The IMF Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEP) in Kuwait, jointly with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), held a high-level symposium on "Public Sector Reforms for Better Governance" on Monday, November 18, 2019. The event was hosted at the AFESD's Headquarters. The panel discussion was chaired and moderated by His Excellency Dr Yusef Al-Ebraheem, Economic Advisor at Al-Diwan Al-Amiri. It included as speakers Vitor Gaspar.

Director of the IMF's Fiscal Affairs Department, who discussed public sector reforms to strengthen governance based on global country experiences; and Ms. GhadaKhalaf, Project Manager of the Government of Kuwait's Restructuring Project, who focused on government reforms to help achieve Kuwait's Vision 2035, as part of a project led jointly by the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, and the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.

His Excellency Dr Yusef Al-Ebraheem indicated that the symposium aimed at stimulating an open debate on the evolving economic challenges faced by policymakers in Kuwait and the wider Arab community. He discussed the importance of public sector reforms for better governance in the Arab world, and overviewed the core measures needed to strengthen fiscal institutions, especially those that are conducive to public sector efficiency, transparency and accountability.

In his presentation, Dr Gaspar started from Ambrogio Lorenzetti's Allegory of Good and Bad Government, which decorates the walls of Palazzo Pubblico on the main square of the city of Siena. It provides a powerful representation of the political philosophy of governance. One particular detail of this masterpiece is most telling. The ruler, who dominates the central painting, has his



hand tied by a cord that is connected, through the citizens, to the scales of justice. In today's language: good government goes together with institutional constraints and controls by active and engaged civil society. Weak control of corruption is one of the symptoms of bad governance. The governance can be imagined as the plumbing system where the resources collected from the economy flow in and out. Corruption causes leakages in this plumbing system hence undermining the effectiveness of public policies and most importantly the credibility of citizens towards its government.

The IMF's recent analysis finds evidence that fiscal transparency and a lower administrative burden correlate with corruption. The highlights the crucial importance of enhancing fiscal transparency, which is one of the ways to bind governments via accountability. In this context Dr Gaspar stressed that the transparency in public finances is central to ensuring that public finances are responsive to the citizens and deliver full accountability.

The use of public sector balance sheets is one of the methods to increase transparency and accountability. That is why the IMF has started

advocating for public sector balance sheets. Looking beyond financial flows, like fiscal deficits, to fully account for what the state owns and owes makes possible informed citizen-state dialogue. It also improves the quality of information in such areas as the inter-temporal effects of policy choices and vulnerability to fiscal risks, which enhances the quality of government actions.

More transparent governments are typically rewarded with better sovereign credit ratings and lower cost of public financing. The public sector balance sheet is particularly important for resource-rich countries. Natural resource reserves can dominate the assets of public sector in commodity producers, such as Norway, Kazakhstan or Guyana.

The sheer size of these assets demands especially strong institutional and governance arrangements. However, resource-rich countries on average have the weaker institutions. Building tax capacity is crucial for achieving transparency and accountability. Tax capacity is central to building state capacity, which is a key pre-requisite for economic growth and development. A modern tax system provides opportunity to build institutions and capacity to enforce it.

## Japan mulls issuing 50-year bonds to support yields

**TOKYO:** Japanese policymakers are considering issuing a 50-year government bond as a long-term way to put a floor under super-long interest rates, sources say. Selling such bonds - a hot topic after Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda commented on the idea this month - would allow the government to lock in cheap long-term funding and give yield-starved investors higher returns.

It could also offer the Bank of Japan (BOJ) a new tool for its "yield-curve control" policy by helping to prevent excessive declines in super-long bond yields, which hurt returns of pension funds. Japan has no immediate plans to issue the bonds, but the Ministry of Finance has long considered the idea, holding hearings with market participants three years ago, a finance ministry official told Reuters.

That plan was turned down because investor demand was scarce, finance ministry officials say. "It has not been ruled out completely and could be an issue to consider in the long run," another ministry official said. Adding 50-year bonds might drain liquidity from markets of other super-long bonds, making yields vulnerable to wild swings, MOF officials say. It is also unclear whether 50-year bonds would be traded much, as investors could suffer huge losses if yields spike.

The Bank of Japan is also scrutinizing how issuing more long bonds could affect its yield-curve policy,

which aims to control the shape of the yield curve, say sources familiar with its thinking. "If the government issues more super-long bonds or starts selling 50-year debt, that could help steepen the yield curve," one of the sources said. The ministry officials and sources familiar with the central bank's thinking spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak to the media. Long bonds have drawn global attention as countries try to use super-low rates to lock in debt. Some European countries have sold 100-year bonds, a move Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the United States might also consider. Japan, too, has fans of long bonds among politicians eager to boost spending. A slowing economy is drawing calls from lawmakers for a big stimulus package.

Ruling party heavyweight Toshiro Nikai yesterday urged the government to spend 10 trillion yen (\$92 billion) in a supplementary budget for the current fiscal year. BOJ Governor Kuroda caused a stir by saying this month that issuing 50-year bonds would help prevent excessive declines in super-long yields. Finance Minister Taro Aso said days later that Japan may consider issuing such bonds. Liquidity for 40-year government bonds - the longest maturity sold in Japan - remains low, making up just 2.4% of the outstanding balance of Japan's government bond market.

And some BOJ officials doubt 50-year bonds would help steepen the yield curve, the sources familiar with the central bank's thinking say. As super-long bonds are traded among a handful of insurers and pension funds, issuing 50-year bonds may simply drain money from other maturities and distort the curve in the wrong direction, they say. If demand for 50-year bonds proves unexpectedly strong, the government could issue them at very low yields. That could push down yields for other super-long bonds. —Reuters

## Kashmir's shutdown causes over losses of more than \$1bn

**SRINAGAR:** Economic losses in Kashmir have run well over a billion dollars since India revoked its autonomy and statehood in August, the main trade body in the Himalayan region said, adding that it planned to sue the government for damages. India turned its erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into a federally-controlled territory, tightening control in a shock move it said would rein in militancy in the region also claimed by neighboring Pakistan, and promote its development. But the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) said development was elusive, thanks to a protracted shutdown after people closed markets and businesses as a mark of protest, and for fear of reprisals from insurgents.

It estimated economic losses ran into least 100 billion rupees (\$1.40 billion) by September, but now exceeded that, said Nasir Khan, its senior vice president. "We'll ask the court to appoint an external agency to assess the losses, because it is beyond us," said Khan, adding that India's telecoms blackout in the region meant the body could not reach business owners by telephone to prepare estimates.

Instead, it had to send staff to meet them and gather details. India's home ministry and local government officials did not respond to detailed requests for comment. Besides severing telecoms links ahead of its decision, India imposed curbs on travel and sent thousands of troops to the heavily-militarized region, citing security concerns. Some curbs have since been eased, but access to the internet remains largely blocked. India and Pakistan have tussled over Kashmir since independence from Britain in 1947, with each claiming the region in full but ruling it only in part.

For decades, India has battled insurgency in the portion it controls. It blames Pakistan for fuelling the strife, but Pakistan denies this, saying it gives only moral support to non-violent separatists. —Reuters



## Business

# Currencies on edge as hopes fade for US-China trade truce

## South African rand, Russian rouble gain

**LONDON:** Emerging-market currencies weakened in subdued trading yesterday, amid growing doubts about a resolution to the US-China trade war that has slowed global growth and rankled financial markets this year. Investor sentiment turned dour after a report that Beijing was pessimistic about striking a trade deal with Washington. Declines were limited when the United States extended by 90 days permission for US companies to do business with China's Huawei Technologies Co Ltd.

An index of developing world currencies fell 0.2% after trading near flat in the previous session. "Overall, we think the chance of a complete breakdown in (US-China) talks is now lower and the chance of a positive resolution - potentially including a rollback of tariffs - is higher," said Mark Haefele, chief investment officer at UBS Global Wealth Management.

Currencies in the developing world have weakened this month on conflicting headlines about resolving the tariff dispute that has now gone on for a year and a half. Financial markets are now looking to major central banks for further hints on monetary policy to stem a global slowdown. The minutes from the US Federal Reserve's latest policy meeting are due on Wednesday, while ECB chief Christine Lagarde delivers her first major speech on Friday.

The Hungarian forint was trading about flat to the euro ahead of the central bank's monthly policy meeting, which is expected to leave interest rates unchanged and signal that the economy is not overheating. The South African rand and Russian rouble gained against a weaker dollar after easing in the previous session. The rouble is also typically supported in the second half of every month by exporters buying the currency to meet local duties.

Turkey's lira gained 0.2%, while currencies in central and eastern European economies including Poland, Czech Republic and Romania were trading in a narrow



**SHANGHAI:** This aerial photo shows a building at the Huawei research and development (R&D) centre in Shanghai yesterday. The United States has granted another 90 days for companies to cease doing business with China's telecoms giant Huawei, saying the move would allow service providers to continue to offer coverage in rural areas. — AFP

range. A basket of emerging-market stocks was up for the third straight session, led by Chinese shares, which posted their best day in two weeks as a surprise cut in a key lending rate on Monday bolstered hopes for more

government stimulus. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index closed up 1.6%, lifted by a report that Alibaba had logged strong demand for its \$13.4 billion secondary listing in the Asian financial hub. — Reuters

## Jazeera Airways signs Flight Hour Services agreement with Airbus

**KUWAIT:** Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, yesterday signed an agreement with Airbus to provide the airline with components support for up to 29 A320neos and A320neos aircraft as part of the Airbus Flight Hour Services (FHS). The agreement was signed during the Dubai Airshow 2019 on the morning of Monday, November 18 by Jazeera Airways Chairman, Marwan Boodai, and Airbus Chief Commercial Officer, Christian Scherer.

Airbus will manage components services which will cover: pool, on-site stock at main base, warehousing, logistics, component maintenance service, and engineer-

ing. Commenting on the agreement, Boodai said: "We are pleased to be expanding our relationship with Airbus which started in 2004, enabling us today to benefit from world-class services to maintain our operational excellence. The new support service will ensure efficient and effective availability of spare parts for our young and growing fleet, in turn improving reliability and further improving our already excellent on-time performance."

Remi Maillard, SVP of Airbus Services said: "We are very pleased to welcome Jazeera Airways as a new member of our FHS program. Leveraging our extensive global components logistics infrastructure and real-time spares inventory visibility, coupled with our engineering know-how, we look forward to working together to help achieve the highest reliability and on-time performance of Jazeera's fleet operations." Jazeera Airways prepares to take delivery of two new A320neo aircraft during the month of November 2019 to bring their fleet size up to 13 aircraft by year end, including four A320neos. Another scheduled order of four A320neo aircraft will be delivered in 2020.



## India may extend onion export ban to cap domestic prices

**MANCHAR:** India may keep a ban on onion exports until February because domestic prices have risen after the harvest of summer-sown crops, which were expected to augment supplies, was delayed and damaged by untimely rains, a government official said. The ban on overseas sales by India, the world's biggest exporter of the bulb, will keep prices elevated in Asia and require importers in Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to find other sources to fulfil their demand. Despite the export ban enacted in September to keep domestic supply inside India, prices have surged after rain and floods during October and November limited onion supply, especially in Maharashtra, the country's biggest producer.

Wholesale onion prices are about 40 rupees (55 cents) per kg, down slightly from 55 rupees earlier this month, the highest in six years, according to data compiled by the state-run National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation. "We will think about resuming exports once prices come down. Right now it is not possible," a senior government official at the Indian Department of Consumer Affairs said on Monday.

"From January onwards supplies are expected to rise meaningfully. Once prices come down to a comfortable level, say below 20 rupees (per kg), then we can allow exports," he said, asking to remain

unidentified because he is not authorized to speak to the media. A spokeswoman for India's Ministry of Commerce, which enacted the ban at the request of the Consumer Affairs department, did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment on how long the export ban would last.

Onion growers and government officials expected the ban would be lifted by the middle of November anticipating higher supplies from the summer crop. Sakharan Darekar, a 79-year-old farmer from the village of Ghodegaon, 180 km (108 miles) east of Mumbai, said that last month's heavy rainfall left fields waterlogged for several days and damaged the onion crop on his 2-acre (0.8 hectares) plot that was ready for harvesting. The rains have also delayed planting of the winter-sown crop by damaging seedlings in nurseries.

"I want to plant onion but seedlings are not available," said Dinesh Khairnar, a farmer in the Nashik district of Maharashtra. Since India's ban, onion prices have spiraled in Asia and forcing leading buyers such as Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to source the crop from Myanmar, Egypt, Turkey and China. But the hefty volumes lost will be hard to replace as India exports more than 2 million tons onions per year. "China or Egypt cannot replace the entire Indian supplies. Asian buyers are waiting for Indian supplies," said a Mumbai-based exporter. — Reuters



**DHAKA:** People scuffle as they purchase subsidized onions in Dhaka. Bangladesh is urgently importing onions by air as the price of the essential ingredient in local cuisine soared to record highs. — AFP

## Tata Steel to cut up to 3,000 jobs across Europe

**AMSTERDAM:** Tata Steel plans to cut up to 3,000 jobs across its European operations, the company said on Monday, as the sector wrestles with excess supply, weak demand and high costs. Earlier, a source close to the discussions told Reuters around 3,000 people would be affected after the group's European chief executive Henrik Adam said Tata was planning to announce job cuts across the European business without giving figures.

In a statement, Tata said it was urgently seeking to improve performance by increasing sales of higher value products, efficiency gains and reducing employment costs by cutting employee numbers by up to 3,000 across its European operations. Around two-thirds of the job losses are expected to be office-based roles, it said. Indian-owned Tata Steel, which launched a transformation program in June to strengthen its European business, has operations including steelmaking in the Netherlands and Wales and downstream operations across Europe.

There will be no plant closures, Tata said, adding the aim was to shield Tata Steel Europe from challenges, such as weak demand, excess capacity and trade issues, and to become cash positive by the end of its financial year ending March 2021. European steelmakers largely blame China for the extent of a surplus in the market, but the world's biggest steelmaker says it has made its own deep cuts to capacity. Tata's quest to boost profitability follows a European anti-trust decision to block a joint venture with Germany's Thyssenkrupp.

Tata said in a statement challenging market conditions had been made "worse by the use of Europe as a dumping ground for the world's excess capacity". In the first six months of its financial year starting April 2019, Tata Steel Europe reported a drop of 90% in EBITDA (earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation). Britain last week said Chinese steelmaker Jingye has signed a provisional deal to buy British Steel, which went into compulsory liquidation in May.

The agreement is politically resonant ahead of British elections as job opportunities have become a major issue. If confirmed, the rescue could save thousands of jobs. ArcelorMittal, the world's biggest steelmaker, has idled a series of plants across Europe. Eurofer, which represents the European steel industry, said in an email job losses were "a worrying and upsetting trend" caused by global overcapacity and hesitant demand. It urged EU policy makers "to help stabilize the EU market by warding off import surges and supporting vital steel sector workers during this challenging period". — Reuters

## ABK sponsors Kuwait Medical Students Awareness Campaign

**KUWAIT:** Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is working closely with the Kuwait Medical Students Association's (KUMSA) on a number of awareness campaigns throughout the year. The next event, to be held at Avenues Mall, is to help raise public awareness of diabetes and prostate cancer. The event will take place on two consecutive days, Wednesday, November 20th and Thursday, November 21st. November marks National Diabetes Day.

Through a series of initiatives and conversations, medical students will encourage public dialogue focused on aspects of prevention and detection. Regular checkups are a key factor in early detection and treatment, and ABK is committed to advocating public awareness and action. The event will not only raise awareness of the diabetes crisis, but will also focus on prostate cancer, with an opportunity for medical students to engage with the public and offer on-site prostate cancer blood tests for free at the event.

CSR initiatives are a key part of ABK's commitment to the country of Kuwait and its people and most of the bank's CSR initiatives revolve around community initiatives, with a view to contributing to a healthy nation and one that benefits from enhanced health, which is a key factor to prosperity and socio economic development. For more information about ABK, please visit eahl.com or contact an ABK customer service agent via 'Ahlani Ahli' at 18998999.

## Third Extension of Temporary license by the US Department

**KUWAIT:** Extending the Temporary General License won't have a substantial impact on Huawei's business either way. This decision does not change the fact that Huawei continues to be treated unfairly either. We have long held that the decision by the US Department of Commerce to add Huawei to the Entity List has caused more harm to the US than to Huawei. This has done significant economic harm to the American companies with which Huawei does business, and has already disrupted collaboration and undermined the mutual trust on which the global supply chain depends. We call on the US government to put an end to this unjust treatment and remove Huawei from the Entity List.



## Novartis wins Kincentric Best Employer 2019 award in Kuwait

**KUWAIT:** Novartis, one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies, announced yesterday that it has won the coveted 'Best Employer 2019' award in Kuwait, as part of Kincentric's Best Employers Global Certification, a program that measures and recognizes leading employers who capture the full power of their people to drive results and create sustainable competitive advantage.

This award is an endorsement of Novartis' consistent ongoing efforts to implement positive career development strategies across its operations. The announcement was made during a ceremony, which took place recently at the Waldorf Astoria, DIFC. Novartis was assessed on four primary measures including employee engagement, organizational agility, leadership connectedness, as well as the focus on attracting and retaining great talent.

Rabab Mounir, Country Head of Kuwait at Novartis said, "Winning this award is more than a recognition of company excellence. It is a tangible acknowledgment of Novartis' contribution to the growth, development and professional nurturing of our talents. We're building an inspired, unbossed, and curious workplace that has the power to become a catalyst for our own people to develop the best solutions to

get our medicines to patients." Tugba Oncu, Head of HR Gulf added, "Our cultural aspiration is for everybody at Novartis to be Inspired, Curious and Unbossed. We have developed many initiatives to champion our cultural priorities and created a safe environment where everyone is encouraged to innovate and speak up. Nurturing and developing our talents is a top priority and an integral part of Novartis employee value proposition. We take a lot of pride in our vision to be a trusted leader in changing the practice of medicine and truly believe it is only achievable through our greatest assets, our people."

With 20 years of experience in Best Employer certification across the world, backed by over 50 years of employee research and a robust global database, the Kincentric Best Employers certification compares organizations to identify those that strive to continuously inspire their people, spark change and accelerate business success.

In the region, Novartis has a long-standing legacy in the region, as it continues to re-imagine medicines that improve and extend people's lives. As a healthcare partner of choice, the company is focused on doubling the impact in the region on everything it does, supported by a unique talent and strong culture.



## What's On



# Alghanim Industries supports UNHCR in Gulf Bank's 642 Marathon

More than 400 employees from Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region, participated in the sixth edition of the Gulf Bank 642 Marathon on Saturday 16 November 2019. This year, Alghanim Industries teamed up with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), joining the 2 Billion Kilometers to Safety campaign, to show solidarity with the millions of people forced to flee their war-torn homes.

The campaign's name refers to the 2 billion kilometers

refugees around the world walk to reach the nearest point of safety, according to estimates by the UNHCR. The event brought together more than 9,300 people representing over 100 different nationalities to participate in the race's four different categories. Alghanim Industries covered the registration fees of all its participants as part of its commitment to support employee activities that promote health and wellbeing, while also providing an opportunity for employees to express support of a meaningful cause.

Commenting on the company's participation in the

event, President of People and Strategy at Alghanim Industries, Syed Hashim Gillani said: "We are honored to partner with the UNHCR in their Step with Refugees movement, raising awareness about the millions who leave their homes and walk billions of kilometers to safety. Embodying the values we promote is important to us as a company, and we're proud of all our employees who participated in the marathon and contributed to this campaign."

The marathon, which is Kuwait's only AbbottWMM-accredited marathon, kicked off on Saturday morning

from Souq Sharq, and included four different categories at different difficulty levels for those looking to run or walk. The categories were: 5km family fun run for beginners; a 10km for amateur runners, an advanced 21km half marathon, and the 42km full marathon.

Alghanim Industries has partnered with UNHCR since 2017 to support a series of education programs, including language skills and homework support groups, to prepare Syrian children to be contributing members within their host countries or upon their return to Syria, with the hope of preventing a lost generation.

## Lotus Alghanim holds Lotus open day

Under the theme "A Weekend with Lotus" and amidst an exciting ambience, Lotus Alghanim held the Lotus Open Day and sponsored Kuwait Motor Town Track Day on October 25, giving its fans the chance to discover its line of supercars and experience the iconic Exige 350s and Evora 400 which stole the show with their powerful stance.

In order to provide customers with an exclusive and genuine experience, Lotus



Alghanim booked the entire KMT south track, and organized two shifts for its guests.

In cooperation with Gulf Bank's Wealth Management team, Lotus Alghanim received a host of prestigious clients between 10 am and 6 pm who enjoyed a fun and entertaining atmosphere as the event included live track coverage, entertainment, live painting, DJ, catering, further to Lotus Alghanim's customized gifts and special promotions on the cars.

Starting 6 pm, the track opened its doors to all Lotus fans that came to showcase their cars and compete passionately within Kuwait Motor Town, which hosts the largest car track in Kuwait, making it the ultimate local attraction for all racing enthusiasts. Attendees were able to test drive Lotus cars, further to getting free rides in the presence of professional

Driving Dynamics drivers who came all the way to Kuwait to guarantee safety and make sure participants enjoy an unforgettable driving experience.

Lotus understands the importance of originality, which is why cars can be customized and fully personalized to tailor to the brand's customer needs. The company's handcrafted designs can be manipulated to create a one-of-a-kind vehicle tailor made for each driver, since a major selling point for Lotus is in fact its uniqueness. The sort of person Lotus is hoping to attract is anyone who enjoys a true sense of individuality and exclusiveness. This brand's customers do not get satisfied with what everyone has and are constantly seeking to acquire the latest, best and most unique.

Lotus drivers aren't content with the idea of being like anybody else, instead they thrive on originality. Whether you're



thinking of reworking the dashboard, changing the color of the sunroof or even altering the interior design, Lotus has what it takes to deliver individuality and personalization like no other. The fact that Lotus only manufactures 2,000 cars per year further pushes the idea that it is "not just for anyone."

Renowned as one of the most respected sports car manufacturers in the world and still at the forefront of lightweight engineering, Lotus offers racing cars especially made for race enthusiasts. This is reflected through the numerous awards won by Team Lotus in a large number of motorsports

series, including F1, Indie Car, and other sports car races. The track is the priority for this car owing to its subtle details and aerodynamic design as Lotus cars were built for the track and for those who love to race.

Car enthusiasts can be the first to know what is new by following Alghanim Motors on Instagram at @AlghanimLotusKW. Car enthusiasts can also experience the purity of speed and unique engineering of Lotus cars at the Alghanim Lotus showroom located in Shuwaikh Industrial, block 1, street 7 next to Xerox and Kromozone on Saturday to Thursday starting from 9 am to 12.30 pm and from 4.30 pm to 8.30 pm.



Within the continuous and distinguished social and charitable activity of activists Sayed Nasrallah Behbehani and Ekbal Behbehani, and in cooperation with "Al Daiya" Cooperative Society, the 6th Annual Shopping Day for Special Needs was organized on Tuesday under the slogan "I can shop with my kids" and under the full sponsorship of Nasrallah Behbehani company & sons. These activities aim to integrate people with special needs in the community and motivate them to go out with their parents for shopping, and not cause disability in their separation from society and normal life. Nasrallah Behbehani company & sons provided a coupon of KD 50 per person to shop during the event. The number of participants and beneficiaries this year reached 175 people with special needs, and 80 volunteers helped with the shopping.





## Health &amp; Science

# Mongolia's new 'cleaner' fuel linked to deaths and illness

**ULAANBAATAR:** One cold night in October, Gerel Ganbaatar decided to stay with her parents in one of Mongolia's traditional ger communities on the outskirts of the capital - a decision which would prove fatal. Within hours of arriving, she and her parents both became breathless and nauseous. They desperately called for help - but by the time medics arrived Gerel, who was four months pregnant, was already dead.

The 29-year-old's parents were using smokeless briquettes to warm their home for the first time that night: A government-issued fuel - made of coking coal from the southern Gobi region and washed coal powder - it has been linked to deaths and ill-health. Since residents started using the briquettes in October, there have been seven other deaths - mainly children, pregnant women, and the elderly. Nearly one thousand have been hospitalized in Ulaanbaatar's outer slum districts, prompting fears the fuel can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.

Gerel's grieving mother, Jargalsaikhan Mishigdorj, warns the fuel should be used with care. "I have burned coal all of my life, we have never ever been suffocated," she explains. The Mongolian government is trying to battle dangerous smog levels in one of the world's most polluted cities by trying to offer replacements for raw coal, which produces a dense, dangerous smoke, but is often used by the poor to warm their homes in a place

where temperature can plummet to minus 40C. Mongolian officials say the briquettes last longer and emit fewer fumes.

## Toxic air

One nurse at the National Poison Emergency hospital, who declined to say her name, told AFP she had never seen the numbers of carbon monoxide poisoning patients so high. "We are working under an enormous amount of pressure," she says. The city's emergency unit said issues were easing once people were told the "correct ways to burn the briquettes".

They said public service workers were spending time in the ger district to teach people about the new fuel as well as to report if any raw coal was still being used. It's the latest example of governments in Asia struggling to find a safe, workable solution to replacing coal, in a region that is battling toxic levels of air pollution. In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise to provide cooking gas connections to millions of rural residents has been beset by corruption.

In neighboring China, three million homes near Beijing were ordered to switch from coal to gas or electric heating in 2017, but a difficult transition left many without any heating at all. Ulaanbaatar is the world's coldest capital and only half of the residents have central heating, and Ulaanbaatar regularly exceeds World Health Organization recommendations

for air quality. The government has been trying to force low grade coal out of commission to reduce the thick air pollution that has plagued the city.

And experts say there is evidence that the move is already having a positive impact on the environment. Sonomdagva, associate professor at the National University of Mongolia, told AFP that PM 2.5 - tiny particles that get into the lungs and bloodstream - had decreased by 40 percent compared with October last year. "However, an incredibly long and warm autumn, plus the usage of the new refined fuel, and fear of suffocation meaning people use only wood (for fuel) can also be reasons of the 40 percent decrease," he said.

## Fear of suffocation

Byambajargal Losol, a physicist at the Mongolian Science Academy, told AFP that he believes the smokeless briquettes are the best way to reduce air pollution - but that more needs to be done to help their safe use. "People are using briquettes just like the old raw coal and burning it the same way," he said, adding: "The briquettes are thick and compact so they require twice as much oxygen to burn, compared to raw coal."

Carbon monoxide poisoning happens when there is restricted oxygen supply. The state-owned factory that produces the briquettes said families should also clean their stoves



**ULAANBAATAR:** People package smokeless fuel at a sales spot in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. — AFP

before burning the new fuel. It has started providing free stove repair services after issues were highlighted in the local press. The government has also promised to distribute free smoke detectors in ger districts.

While citizens say the briquettes have benefits, some remain wary. Ger resident Turbold Sainbuyan told AFP that the new briquettes save time and last longer. "I had to break up

the raw coal, (but) the briquettes are ready to use," he says. "Now we use one bag of briquettes for three days compared to one bag of raw coal for only one day," he adds. His mother Enkhjargal Chuluun, a nurse at private dental clinic, said the briquettes are warmer than raw coal. She says: "But we still have fear of suffocation, so we started opening the window at night." — AFP

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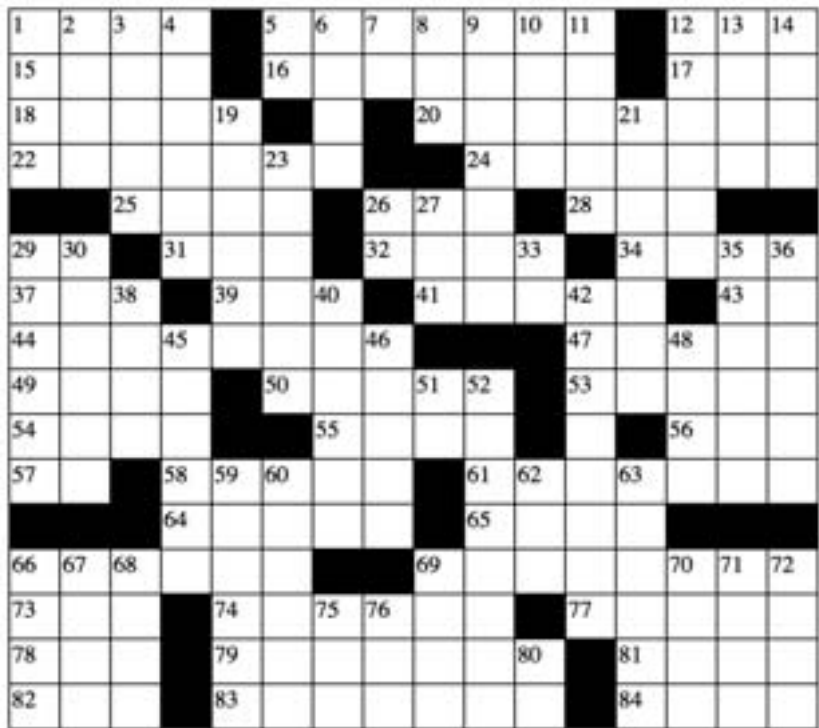
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ACROSS

1. A brace that extends from the rear of the keel to support the rudderpost.  
5. A transparent piece of diamond that has been cut and polished and is valued as a precious gem.  
12. Sandwich filled with slices of bacon and tomato with lettuce.  
15. Type genus of the Pipidae.  
16. An exclusive circle of people with a common purpose.  
17. An edge tool with a heavy bladed head mounted across a handle.  
18. The distinctive spirit of a people or an era.  
20. Obstruction of the sweat ducts during high heat and humidity.  
22. Basal part of a plant ovule opposite the micropyle.  
24. An ACE inhibiting drug (trade names Prinivil or Zestril) administered as an antihypertensive and after heart attacks.  
25. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.  
28. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.  
29. A monarchy in northwestern Europe occupying most of the British Isles.  
31. A small piece of cloth.  
32. A small cake leavened with yeast.  
34. Tree bearing large brown nuts containing e.g. caffeine.  
37. Domestic swine.  
39. Electrical conduction through a gas in an applied electric field.  
41. A genus of Placidae.  
43. Before noon.  
44. The edible flesh of any of various crabs.  
47. (possibly Roman) Goddess of horses and mules and asses.  
49. The largest continent with 60% of the earth's population.  
50. The sound of sheep or goats (or any sound resembling this) v 1.  
53. The capital and largest city of Liechtenstein.  
54. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.  
55. The habitation of wild animals.  
56. An inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others.  
57. The fifth day of the week.  
58. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.  
61. An airfoil that controls lateral motion.  
64. A message expressing an opinion based on incomplete evidence.  
65. (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.  
66. Preserve a dead body.  
73. The cry made by sheep.  
74. Large family of bark-boring or wood-boring short-beaked beetles.  
77. Detected or perceived by the sense of hearing.  
78. The executive agency that advises the President on the federal budget.  
79. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).  
81. Pass gradually or leak through or as if through small openings.  
82. A negative.  
83. Genus of beetles whose grubs feed mainly on roots of plants.  
84. United States lawyer and politician who formulated a production code that prescribed the moral content of United states films from 1930 to

1966 (1879-1954).

DOWN

1. A detailed description of design criteria for a piece of work.  
2. Your friends and acquaintances.  
3. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.  
4. Someone who guards prisoners.  
5. The district occupied entirely by the city of Washington.  
6. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.  
7. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).  
8. The 13th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.  
9. A city of east central Mexico (west of Veracruz).  
10. World's longest river (4187 miles).  
11. A person who believes that God created the universe and then abandoned it.  
12. A Spanish-speaking quarter in a town or city (especially in the United States).  
13. Being two more than sixty.  
14. A bluish shade of green.  
19. A deep bow.  
21. A member of an Indian people formerly living along the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.  
23. The capital of Croatia.  
26. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.  
27. (Scotland) A small loaf or roll of soft bread.  
30. From fermented juice of black morello cherries.  
33. A public promotion of some product or service.  
35. The fine downy hair covering a human fetus.  
36. A large strong and aggressive woman.  
38. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.  
40. Greek coloratura soprano (born in the United States) known for her dramatic intensity in operatic roles (1923-1977).  
42. Showing the cunning or ingenuity or wickedness typical of a devil.  
45. A member of an agricultural people of southern India.  
46. The process of shedding tears (usually accompanied by sobs or other inarticulate sounds).  
48. A European river.  
51. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.  
52. Relating to or resembling or functioning like a trachea.  
59. Eurasian perennial bulbous herbs.  
60. Having or resembling fibers especially fibers used in making cordage such as those of jute.  
62. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.  
63. Entangle or catch in in or as if in a mesh.  
67. Informal terms for a mother.  
68. Being or befitting or characteristic of an infant.  
69. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.  
70. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.  
71. The nest of a squirrel.  
72. A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.  
75. An artificial language that is a revision and simplification of Esperanto.  
76. Lacking in light.  
80. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You will be extremely busy today. There will be many times where you will have to supply a solution to a particular problem. Be prepared to work hard. This is not a great time to attempt to plan a noon break with friends as you may find yourself less conversational. It would be good to walk or visit a pet or music store, if possible. Transferring your concentration to a lighthearted arena would do wonders for your energy level and enthusiasm as you return to the work expectations.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Today is a fine day . . . Your work benefits from your total concentration. This may be a good thing as you will be able to forget about personal plans for a while and relax your expectations of the day. Surprises happen all day long and, you are able to finish what you start in the work world. The noon break is fun with co-worker friends and somewhere in the visit there is talk of metaphysics, horoscopes and telling fortunes. You are also interested in the subject of writers and teachers that talk about self-help techniques.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Whether you are working in a place of business or at home, your attention is in getting things completed. If you find yourself working within a group today, you will be productive. You expect praise for your good works but this may not come on your time schedule so-do not push. Emotions and feelings of those around you may be very clear allowing you to know what is expected of your energies and your time. If you have things you want to accomplish that might be a separate interest from the people you are with-set reasonable time limits before obligating yourself to new projects.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You waste few words when you describe or give instructions. You could be in a hurry, so if someone has a lot of difficulty in understanding what you want, be wise with your response. You have a natural sense of organization and come across as disciplined and careful, perhaps a little too sober. An inner vision, coupled with the ability to see the big picture, may find you working as a go-between with others. You could even have a special gift for spanning the generation gap, bringing older and younger spirits together. A love of animals, children, older people and the needy, is a lifelong trait that is visible today.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Opportunities may go against your own sense of security and you may feel it is best not to take chances. This is a tough call when it comes to business and some compromise is perhaps the best way to a workable solution. Your career, practical vision and skills are of central importance to you now. You feel there is a waste of time if there is no organization and your actions are deliberate in this area of your life. Your reputation and image are a source of concern and you do everything you can to make them solid. You appear perhaps more charming and refined than usual this evening as people gather to celebrate or just simply gather together away from the workplace.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your work or career is in true harmony with the rest of your life. Much can be accomplished. You could gain from subordinates or young people just now as information or help is available for whatever you want to complete. You make your way through ideas and concepts, and you have a good ability to communicate and express them to others. Reading or attending a lecture on law, politics, education, travel or religion may be part of your day, which is productive. Your creative side is showing this afternoon when you help a friend decorate or update an old look.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Self-sacrifice and an understanding attitude on your part could have far-reaching effects on your own life-path and career during this time. You have improved your working abilities and higher-ups are taking note. This may mean that you are working more efficiently with others and this helps you to achieve bigger and more encompassing goals. Outer circumstances are favorable and it should be easy for you to push forward with regard to developing your career. You will have no problem moving up the professional ladder. Now is the time when personal insight into your most secret and psychological self may be possible.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your idea of where you want to be in this life and where you really are with your goals are very close. You are progressing well with your goals and you will want to set some new goals soon. Do not be afraid that present goals will be forgotten as you begin to look into toward the future-they will soon be realized. This is a time of good fortune-when things open up in a very natural way for you. Situations are within your reach and it is easy to see which path is the one for you to take. Opportunities to improve and enlarge your friendships are available to you now. You may find yourself wanting to do almost anything today. This is a good time to project your image.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Go with the flow today. Trust in your own instincts. Your ideas are just as good, if not better, than someone else's ideas. Take a chance-try out your new ideas-you will have a feeling of accomplishment. Perhaps you are improving or updating a piece of technical equipment or some new computer software. Your perseverance pays off, particularly when you stop occasionally for a break or two-all work and no play, etc. A person that you were close to in the past may contact you this afternoon. An earnest effort in letting go of hard feelings can free you to move forward. This person has something special to offer you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Investigating and examining results and statistics find you at your mental best. Your analytical abilities are at a high. This can be an expansive, creative and successful time-a time you may remember with much fondness. You are your warm, loyal and generous self today and others follow your example as you deal with the public and interact with others in the workplace. Your need for admiration and appreciation will certainly be met as you entertain and visit with friends this afternoon. Others could seek you out for your psychological insight and understanding.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You will make practical decisions concerning group issues today. A supervisor or higher-up is listening to your intelligent summations about how things should be run. You have a natural sense of what the public wants. You are always making new discoveries. Clear decisions affecting others are requested and triumphant. You have a great appreciation of how your life is going and this afternoon you will be able to enjoy the company of a good friend. You will both enjoy talking about what each of you has accomplished. Perhaps you will even be evaluating and reassessing your plans for the future. Life, like a good painting, has to be looked at occasionally to really appreciate the true essence. Friends may visit this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Money, money, money-it seems to occupy your mind much of this day. You could be applying for a loan or looking to purchase a vehicle or home and there is almost a feeling of static electricity in the air. Easy does it, meaning, have more confidence. If you really need this new item to make your life work better, it will be yours! Be aware, however, that time and process may not meet with your own idea of how things should move along. Do not let these thoughts occupy your time-you will want to be attentive to your work. You are valued for your ability to make practical decisions and you could find yourself representing co-workers in sensitive issues.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Old TV Shows 2

Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.



A-TEAM  
ALF  
AIRWOLF  
BARETTA  
BARNABY JONES  
BENSON  
BIG VALLEY  
BONANZA  
CHEERS  
COACH  
DALLAS

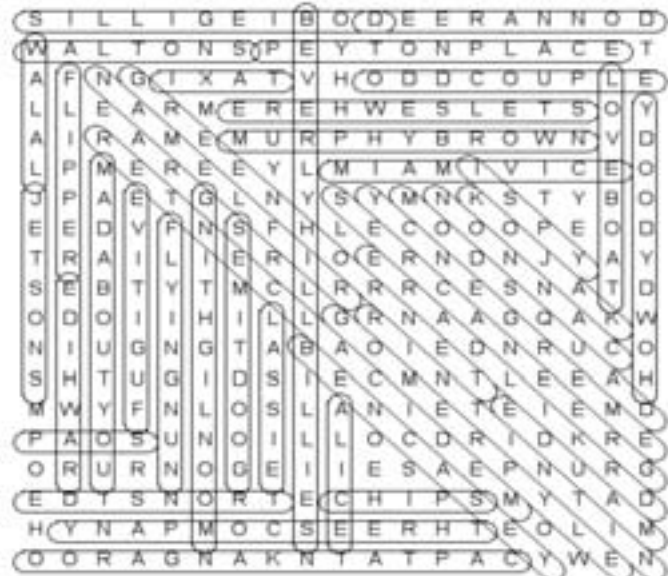
DOCTOR WHO  
DYNASTY  
EQUALIZER  
FALCON CREST  
FAME  
FANTASY ISLAND  
FISH  
FLINTSTONES  
FULL HOUSE  
GROWING PAINS  
HAWAII FIVE-O

HEE HAW  
HUNTER  
JEFFERSONS  
KNIGHT RIDER  
MACGYVER  
MAVERICK  
MAYBERRY  
MISTER ED  
MUNSTERS  
NANNY

NEWHART  
NIGHT COURT  
OUTER LIMITS  
PRISONER  
S.W.A.T.  
SILVER SPOONS  
T.J. HOOKER  
TWILIGHT ZONE  
VIRGINIAN  
WEBSTER

Yesterday's Solution

Old TV Shows 1



ALICE  
BEN CASEY  
BEVERLY HILLBILLIES  
CHIPS  
CANNON  
CAPTAIN KANGAROO  
DOBBIE GILLIS  
DONNA REED  
DR. KILDARE  
EMERGENCY  
FLIPPER

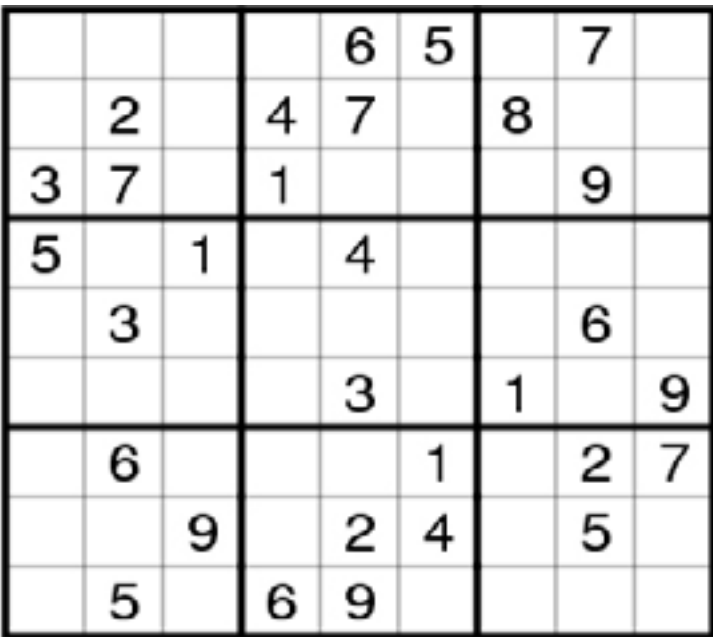
FLYING NUN  
FUGITIVE  
GOMER PYLE  
GOOD TIMES  
GREEN ACRES  
GREEN HORNET  
HOWDY DOODY  
I SPY  
IRONSIDE  
JETSONS  
KOJAK

L.A. LAW  
LASSIE  
LOVE BOAT  
MAD ABOUT YOU  
MAUDE  
MEDICAL CENTER  
MIAMI VICE  
MOD SQUAD  
MOONLIGHTING  
MURPHY BROWN

ODD COUPLE  
PEYTON PLACE  
RAWHIDE  
RIFLEMAN  
RIN TIN TIN  
SOAP  
ST. ELSEWHERE  
TAXI  
THREE'S COMPANY  
WALTONS

The hidden TV show is: THE MARY TYLER MOORE SHOW

Daily SuDoku



hard

Yesterday's Solution



very hard



# Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2019



St. Peter's Basilica is reflected in a pool of rainwater on Via della Conciliazione in Rome, leading to the Vatican. — AFP

## Top dog: Turkmen breed rivals horse for national affection

A gift for foreign leaders, a subject of presidential poetry and the inspiration for a new statue in the capital—the alabai shepherd dog’s stock has never been higher in horse-loving Turkmenistan. For as long as anyone can remember—or 4,000 years, according to strongman President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov—this barrel-chested, large-skulled breed has been at the side of nomads and their flocks in the mostly desert country.

Outside Turkmenistan, the dog that reaches up to 85 centimeters in height and has a tough, wiry coat is known as a sub-breed of the Central Asian shepherd dog. But in the former Soviet state of Turkmenistan the dog is listed as national heritage, and its status is growing every day thanks to Berdymukhamedov, who is using the alabai to help foster a sense of national pride. In a tome on the alabai published this year Berdymukhamedov wrote that Turkmen ancestors “saw in the horse our dreams, and in the alabai our happiness”.

In September he presented cabinet members with a poem about the dog as a “symbol of achievement and victory” that has since been converted into song. And earlier this month he unveiled a plan to build a statue to the dog—potentially as high as 15 meters — in the capital Ashgabat. This was an honor previously only accorded to horses, including one with Berdymukhamedov depicted in the saddle.

According to long-term watchers of the isolated authoritarian country, Berdymukhamedov’s frequent appearances on state media with alabai are more than just a personal quirk. Like the Akhal-Teke horse, a national breed reputed for its grace and beauty, the alabai “assists the state in solidifying the idea of the territory of Turkmenistan as firmly Turkmen,” said Victoria Clement, a historian and author of the book “Learning to Become Turkmen”.

### Fierce and loyal

While alabai are commonly kept as house pets in Ashgabat, it is the rural half of Turkmenistan’s 5.5 million population that has the deepest connection with the dogs, which are also used by border patrols and police. Ashir-aga Ishanov, 73, was frightened of the alabai as a child until his shepherd grandfather reassured him it would never harm a human. One night when their desert camp was surrounded by a pack of howling wolves, he witnessed the combative qualities of the dog up close.

“My grandfather and I jumped out of the yurt and saw a wolf grab a sheep,” Ishanov, who now lives in Ashgabat, told AFP. Ishanov’s alabai rushed after the wolf and took a chunk out of its neck, causing the pack to retreat in fear.

“I was overcome by the courage of our dog,” Ishanov said, his voice straining with emotion. Attempts to export the alabai are criminally punishable—a Kazakh ambassador’s effort to smuggle a dog out of the country in 2005 caused a diplomatic scandal. But some lucky foreigners have received the dogs as gifts. Berdymukhamedov handed Russian President Vladimir Putin an alabai puppy by the scruff of its neck as a 65th birthday present in 2017.



In this file photo Turkmenistan’s President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov holds a Turkmen shepherd dog, locally known as Alabai.

### Bred for battle

Perhaps the alabai’s proudest moment was being chosen over its equine rival as the mascot of the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games—a tournament that Turkmenistan hosted with great pomp in 2017. The alabai is trained to fight from a young age and breeders clip the dogs’ ears and cut their tails down to stumps in preparation for battle. But unlike stray dogs, which animal rights groups have criticized Turkmen authorities for routinely rounding up and shooting, cultural norms protect the alabai from death or serious injury in the fights.

The battles are stopped “when one of the dogs shows fear” said Dovlet Kurikov, who served for more than a decade as head of Turkmenistan’s leading alabai association before retiring in 2016. During a tour of kennels at his home, Kurikov pointed proudly to a 100-kilogramme dog called Gaplan, or “Tiger”, which won Turkmenistan’s national alabai fight championship in 2018. Such champions can fetch over \$25,000, Kurikov said—not that he has any intention of selling. “If my child is ill, I ask my wife to call a doctor,” Kurikov said. “If my dog is ill, I will sit with it day and night and not eat until my dog begins to eat.” — AFP

Police alabai shepherd dogs are seen riding in trucks during a military parade in central Ashgabat.



A Turkmen boy wearing a traditional dress caresses an alabai shepherd dog puppy at a kennel outside Ashgabat. — AFP photos







Workers work at the El Deposito, a Spanish-era water reservoir being rehabilitated for tourism, in San Juan town, suburban Manila. — AFP photos

# Manila's hidden reservoir to re-emerge as tourist draw



In this photo, a general views Carriedo fountain, one of the first fountains built with its source coming from the El Deposito, a Spanish-era water reservoir being rehabilitated for tourism, Manila.

Vaulted ceilings and rows of stone columns stretch into the humid darkness deep below the Philippine capital, where workers are transforming a more-than-century-old underground reservoir into a draw for tourists. The sparks of welding guns illuminate the damp contours of El Deposito, an abandoned Spanish colonial-era relic with a rich history that has been hidden from view for decades. “(El Deposito) has a very colorful history that we Filipinos must appreciate and value even after all these years,” Kaye Oliveros, curator for the soon-to-be-opened site told AFP.

Crafted from volcanic rock and completed 137 years ago, the underground cavern was made to hold 14 million gallons of water, which was pumped through iron pipes into thousands of homes until the early 20th century. Japanese forces drained the cavern during World War II and used the tunnels as an ammunition dump. US forces destroyed El Deposito's above-ground structures as they retook the Philippines in 1945. The reservoir fell into neglect after the war, turning into a dump-site and even being invaded by squatters over the next half century.

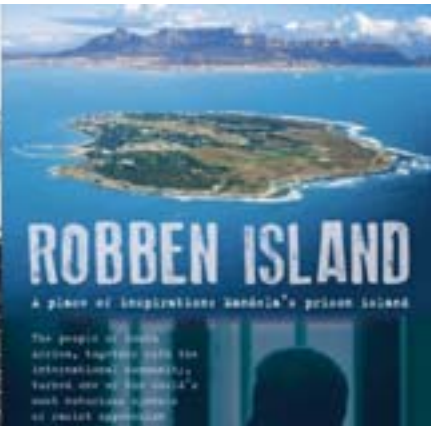
In 1973 the government declared the site a national shrine, and in 2016 a four-year cleanup started. Construction crews have been working to finish a metal walkway and other infrastructure that will welcome visitors when the site is due to open to the public in February. The opening comes in the run-up to the 500th anniversary in 2021 of explorer Ferdinand Magellan's arrival in the Philippines during the first successful circumnavigation of the Earth. He claimed the archipelago for Spain, which would rule the Philippines as a colony for nearly the next 400 years.

The reservoir, which was built toward the end of Spanish control, was a major advancement for the residents of Manila. Before then, water was



In this photo a general view of Marikina river, which supplied water to the El Deposito, a Spanish-era water reservoir being rehabilitated for tourism, in Marikina town, suburban Manila.

scooped out of the river and delivered to the capital's homes by porters lugging large clay jars. “We always think the Spaniards treated us so badly at that time, but somehow they have given us the (means) to provide clean water for Filipinos,” Oliveros said. — AFP



## South Africa's top UNESCO world heritage sites

South Africa is home to ten UNESCO World Heritage Sites, testifying to its wonderful variety across the boards of cultural, historical and natural treasures. The aim of the World Heritage Site accreditation is to recognize the values and achievements across various categories, all of which promote the destination and play an important part of uplifting the local communities that benefit from the visitors that they welcome. There are six cultural sites and four in the natural sites, confirming South Africa as a global hotspot for both cultural and natural treasures.

### What are World Heritage Sites?

A country's heritage is the essence of its identity. It speaks of what it has endured, its achievements, and how these will affect its residents in future. Heritage incorporates the natural treasures and the cultural gems complementing the historical factor to create a place that is deeply significant, with a character of its own.

### Evidence of early humans

The fossil evidence contained within these sites proves conclusively that the African continent is the undisputed Cradle of Humankind. This site includes the



Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Kromdraai and Environs caves, as well as the Makapan Valley and Taung Skull Fossil Site. They create a network of some of the most important fossils in understanding the evolution of early modern humans over the past 3.5 million years. These fossils have allowed archaeologists to identify a range of early humans from more than 4 million years ago. They also show evidence of the domestication of fire by humans and ancient fauna and flora. Despite so much having already been uncovered, the UN believes there is the possibility of finding even more.

### Melting pot of habitats

This region is where coral reefs, sandy beaches, coastal dunes, lakes, swamps, and wetlands meet and harmonize. The five interlinking ecosystems support a large number of threatened and/or endemic species which continue to adapt and thrive. A few stand-out species include the sea turtles which nest on the sandy shores, and the enormous flocks of flamingos which roost on the edge of the lakes.

### Layered history of Robben Island

Robben Island's history goes back to the 17th century. It was the final resting place of Hadije Kramat in 1755, once housed a leper colony, was a WWII base, and was also, of course, a maximum security prison under the Apartheid era where Nelson Mandela lived out his 25-year sentence. Relics of all these eras remain and this layering reflects Robben Island's history. The symbolic value of Robben Island lies in its somber history, as a prison and a hospital for unfortunates who were sequestered as being socially undesirable. This came to an end in the 1990s when the Apartheid regime was rejected by the South African people and the political prisoners who had been incarcerated on

the Island received their freedom after many years.'

### Maloti-Drakensberg Park

The crannies of this enormous range fostered not only widespread plant species, but also provided a place for human expression. The uKhahlamba-Drakensberg National Park in South Africa and the Sehlabathebe National Park in Lesotho is home to the largest and most concentrated group of rock art paintings in sub-Saharan Africa. This diverse collection 'represents the spiritual life of the San people, who lived in this area over a period of 4,000 years.

### Relics

This site is where you can find the virtually untouched remains of palaces and villages belonging to the largest kingdom to have existed in Africa. This site holds evidence of more than 400 years of social and political life there before it was abandoned in the 14th century due to a drought. This kingdom was at the crossroads of trade routes into southern Africa, making it the most important inland settlement in the region. Archaeological finds attest to this.







# Global Grad show opens to world's largest, most diverse gathering

The only exhibition of its kind, showcasing graduate projects from over 100 universities from 43 countries, in the fields of design, science, technology and engineering, Global Grad Show returns with the most diverse edition to date. New entrants include established names such as Columbia University, Goldsmiths and The University of Pennsylvania, alongside leading universities from countries participating for the first time, including Colombia, Kuwait and the Philippines.

Global Grad Show is a significant component of Dubai Design Week, which is held under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikhha Latifa Bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Dubai Culture & Arts Authority. Earlier this year, Global Grad Show was named as a key initiative under the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority's plan to evolve Dubai into a global hub for culture and innovation.

Her Highness Sheikhha Latifa Bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, said: "As a platform for the next generation of designers, Global Grad Show is one of the most vital elements of Dubai Design Week, offering unprecedented opportunities for students and graduates to present their work to organisations, investors and the wider public. The presentations feature design-driven solutions for a wide range of global challenges from climate change to accessibility to science and health. This initiative is at the heart of Dubai's vision to create a brighter future for all people through progress and innovation. Global Grad Show is a call to action for government and private entities to revisit their challenges and needs in response to current socioeconomic issues. I encourage all entities to engage with the students and collaborate to bring their ideas to life."

His Excellency Mohammed I Al Shaibani, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of Investment Corporation of Dubai, said: "With each year of Investment Corporation of Dubai's participation at Global Grad Show, we have witnessed ever greater enthusiasm and interest from the international cultural, creative, and intellectual communities. This reception is a true endorsement to the caliber that the Global Grad Show has developed over its five years. It brings the most innovative minds to Dubai, and facilitates the advancement of society through new design solutions. These are key drivers for ICD's partnership with the Global Grad Show, and it gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone back to Dubai."

Under the curation of Eleanor Watson, Global Grad Show explores how innovation can impact our lives through different spheres: The Human, The Home, The Community, The City and The Planet. Some of the projects correspond to themes such as health, wealth & disparity, gender & equality, sustainability, education and technology. The projects for Global Grad Show are selected based on their response to a range of criteria, as well as the four tenets of the exhibition: Innovation, Impact, Equality and Exchange.

Ranging from high-tech to low-tech solutions, highlight projects in the 2019 exhibition include: 'Swiv', a toothbrush for children with cognitive disabilities, allowing them to clean their teeth with a single physical motion; 'Jarvis', a mixed reality headset, enabling doctors to accurately measure the brain's response to distractions or activities when conducting cognitive tests for severe head trauma, pharmaceutical efficacy and ADHD; and 'Ro-Biotics', a microscopic robot created from 4D printed materials to be ingested in the place of an antibiotic, which captures infections in the blood stream.

## Entrepreneurship program

Offering participating graduates the oppor-



tunity to advance their projects into start-ups, the Global Grad Show Entrepreneurship Programme invites graduates to interact with stakeholders from the entrepreneurship ecosystem and focuses on training that covers business skills and methodologies to develop their projects.

Mohammad Al Shehhi, CEO of ARM Holding said: "The decade-long investment we are making through the ARM fund for Global Grad Show speaks to our earnest dedication to social and economic endeavors working for the benefit of society. We are proud to be helping graduates from all over the world turn their innovative concepts into reality."

The program's ambition is to support graduates to develop viable businesses and attract young innovation talent from around the world, to Dubai through the support of A.R.M. Holding and in line with the Emirate's vision to elevate the level of talent flowing into the country and region.

## Record attendance at Dubai Design Week

Staged in strategic partnership with Dubai Design District (d3), with the support of Dubai Culture & Arts Authority (DCAA) alongside Audi and A.R.M. Holding, the region's largest creative festival welcomed over 90,000 visitors to d3 with an extensive program of 200 activities including talks, workshops large-scale site-specific installations, exhibitions and trade fairs. Reflecting the city's position as the

regional hub for design and creativity, over 560 designers from across the world took part in the festival that over its five years has become established as a key event in the global design calendar.

Benedict Floyd, CEO of Art Dubai Group, which owns and manages the event, said: "By bringing together designers from across the world and facilitating the immense wealth of creative talent in the region in commercial and non-commercial activities, Dubai Design Week has grown exponentially in terms of programming, audience and the number of participants. This year's edition reiterates the vast potential for growth in Dubai's creative industries, and we are sincerely grateful to our partners, sponsors, participants and over 150 volunteers for making this all possible".

Khadja Al Bastaki, Executive Director of d3 said, "As strategic partner of Dubai Design Week, we are thrilled with how well-received this edition has been. This year has truly been the best ever - with a significant increase in footfall, d3's partnership with Dubai Design Week ensures that Dubai is firmly placed at the centre of the creative and innovation-based industries and we look forward to seeing this continue. From the Global Grad Show, which provided a platform for the exceptional talent of 150 projects by international students, to Downtown Design showcasing the work of hundreds of exhibitors, the festival hosted a very high calibre of design installations, activa-



tions, talks and workshops bringing some of the best design-related content to Dubai."

Reflecting Dubai Design Week's objectives of establishing Dubai as a global hub for social impact design and being a platform to support and promote regional and UAE based designers, three awards were announced during the week:

## ICD progress prize winner

The winning project of Global Grad Show's ICD Progress Prize was announced as Poleno, a silent drone that helps to rebuild damaged ecosystems by stimulating pollination. Designed by Laura Cragnolini and Juan Jose Martinez Guerrero from Instituto Europeo di Design, Madrid, Poleno is a traveling device that mimics the purpose of a flower, attracting insects through its bright colors and built-in light. The ICD Progress Prize celebrates the next generation of innovators and their commitment to finding solutions for social and environmental issues and awards the winner \$10,000 to enable them to further develop their project presented at Global Grad Show.

## Audi Innovation Awards 2019

Audi Middle East announced Pincher by Twelve Degrees as the winner of the fourth Audi Innovation Award, responding to this year's theme of 'simplification'. Selected from over 2,500 submissions from across the Middle East, the winning project is a physical interpre-

tation of the phrase "a pinch of salt". Rather than shaking salt and pepper out of a dispenser, the process has been represented through the motion of pinching a lightweight silicon device whereby the opening of the nozzle is precisely the amount that would be released from between your own fingertips. Sahar Madanat from Twelve Degrees received US \$25,000 in consultancy to develop her project which was showcased together with the two runners up within the Audi Innovation Hub in d3

## Rado Star Prize UAE

Swiss watch maker Rado brought the Rado Star prize to the UAE offering UAE-based design talent an opportunity to launch their career on the international stage. This year, Rado announced Aya Charife as the winner of the Rado Star Prize with her project Takyeef, an outdoor element that functions as an air conditioner, which can be fixed in a repetitive formation constructed as high and as wide as the area that requires thermal change. Established in various countries around the world, the competition supports young, unestablished designers, allowing them to submit their innovative proposals for a chance to be featured at Dubai Design Week the following year, focusing on the idea of design as something enduring, long-lasting and versatile. Aya Charife received AED 20,000 in prize money and a Rado watch.







In this file photo, a Victor Edelstein midnight blue velvet evening gown, worn by Britain's Princess Diana at the State Dinner at the White House in 1985, when she danced with US actor John Travolta, is pictured at the Kerry Taylor Auction house in south London ahead of its sale. — AFP

## Dress Diana wore when she danced with Travolta up for sale

A midnight blue velvet gown worn by Princess Diana when she danced with actor John Travolta at the White House is being put up for sale, an auction house said Monday. She wore the Victor Edelstein dress when she and her then husband Prince Charles attended a state dinner hosted by then president Ronald Reagan on November 9, 1985. It was immortalized when Diana was photographed dancing with Travolta to the song "You Should be Dancing" from his film "Saturday Night Fever".

Estimated at \$250,000-\$350,000 (\$324,000-\$454,000), the dress is one of three being sold by Kerry Taylor Auctions on December 9. They also include a long-sleeved dress from 1986 by Katherine Cusack, also in midnight-blue velvet, and a Catherine Walker navy wool day dress from around 1989. The Edelstein dress was part of a collection of outfits that Diana herself sold for charity at auction in June 1997, just weeks before she was killed in a car crash in Paris. —AFP

## Polanski film tops French box office despite rape claim

Roman Polanski's new film is topping the French box office despite a new rape allegation against the controversial director. "An Officer and a Spy" surged ahead of the Matt Damon racing car epic "Ford v Ferrari"—which is top of the US box office—despite the publicity campaign for the movie being suspended in the wake of the latest claims against the veteran film-maker.

French photographer Valentine Monnier threw the release of the historical thriller about the Dreyfus Affair into disarray by accusing Polanski of raping her in 1975 when she was 18 after beating her "into submission" at his Swiss chalet. But despite protests outside cinemas and a call by feminists to boycott the movie starring Oscar-winning actor Jean Dujardin, nearly 400,000 people had flocked to see it by late Monday.

Polanski, 86, denies attacking Monnier, a former model and actress, and has threatened to sue his accusers. The unexpectedly strong turnout for the film is the seventh best opening weekend by a French film in 2019, according to figures from CBO Box-Office. Its success angered critics of the French-Polish maker of "Rosemary's Baby" and "Chinatown", who has been a fugitive from US justice since admitting to the statutory rape of a 13-year-old girl in 1977 in a plea bargain to avoid a trial on more serious charges. Melissa Silverstein, the American founder of Women and Hollywood, was scathing. "WTF France?" she tweeted.

### Heads in the ground

"In the column of how much more work needs to be done (on women in the film industry) — Roman Polanski's movie led the box office in France," Silverstein had lacerated the organizers of the Venice film festival earlier this year for selecting the film, which went on to win the Silver Lion and the critics' prize despite the head of the jury, Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel, admitting she was "uncomfortable" about Polanski.

Industry insiders said that "An Officer and a Spy", based on the anti-Semitic persecution of the French Jewish army officer Alfred Dreyfus, might have done even better had it not been for the new rape claim. They



In this file photo French-Polish director Roman Polanski poses as he arrives for the '70th Anniversary' ceremony of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France. — AFP

told the film industry bible Variety that the movie's success is clearly driven by word-of-mouth, and that its strong run in cinemas is set to continue. As the box office figures were released Monday, the French directors guild ARP passed a proposal that could see Polanski suspended from the organization next year when its members meet to discuss a rule change on sexual abuse claims.

"We cannot put our heads in the ground and pretend that the world hasn't changed," Pierre Jolivet, the head of the ARP, told AFP. Polanski has already been expelled from the US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, although he has mounted a legal challenge to the decision. Meanwhile, veteran French director Nadine Trintignant rowed back on her earlier support for the veteran after saying that she was "more inclined to believe him than a woman who has taken 44 years to think about denouncing him".

In a new statement, the mother of the actress Marie Trintignant—who was killed by her pop star boyfriend Bertrand Cantat in 2003 — insisted she supported all women who "courageously struggle to stop violence against women". It came after her family—one of France's theatrical dynasties—said they "believed Monnier", and without naming Polanski, stressed that "even an immense artist is first of all a human being". — AFP

## Ex-label says Taylor Swift can sing her old hits at awards show



In this file photo Singer/songwriter Taylor Swift arrives on the red carpet for the Time 100 Gala at the Lincoln Center in New York. — AFP

Taylor Swift's former label said Monday that it will allow the global pop superstar to perform some of her early hits at an awards show this month—the latest twist in a months-long public feud over the rights to her first six albums. But even the seeming resolution of the spat did not come without some confusion. The Big Machine Label Group released what it called a joint statement with Dick Clark Productions—which puts on the American Music Awards—saying they had "reached a licensing agreement" that would allow Swift to sing what she wants at the November 24 ceremony.

But shortly thereafter, the producers distanced themselves from the situation, saying it was between Swift and her ex-label. Big Machine, which is based in Nashville, then clarified that it had "informed" the production company of its licensing approval. Swift's publicist did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment, and the pop star has yet to react publicly.

Last week, Swift-known for her calculating social media strategy—said on Tumblr that Big Machine heads were "exercising tyrannical control" over her. She claimed they had told her she was "not allowed to perform my old songs on television because they claim that would be re-recording my music before I'm allowed to next year." The pop superstar-famous for megahits like "Shake It Off" and "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together"—also said Big Machine was preventing her from using "older music or performance footage" for a Netflix project.

The company, which did not refer to the Netflix issue in its latest statements, denied the allegations last week. "It should be noted that recording artists do not need label approval for live performances on television or any other live media," Big Machine said Monday. "Record label approval is only needed for contracted artists' audio and visual recordings and in determining how those works are distributed."

Swift began publicly sparring with industry mogul Scooter Braun this summer over his purchase of her former label of more than a decade, which gave him a majority stake in the master recordings of her first six albums. The 29-year-old then vowed to re-record her early albums to create copies she owns herself, saying her contract allows her to begin redoing albums one through five in November 2020 — when she plans to be back in the studio doing just that. Swift signed a new deal with Universal Music Group in 2018 that gave her ownership of her masters going forward, including for her recently released seventh album "Lover." — AFP

## France's glue trap bird hunting draws ire

In the dead of night, hunter Daniel Portalis is busy spreading adhesive lime on to sticks by torchlight on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean port city of Marseille. Placing them in trees or bushes, he hopes to catch a thrush by enticing the woodland bird to land on the sticky substance. Loved or loathed, a new season of glue trap hunting is under way in southeastern France, angering opponents who say the capture of thousands of thrushes and blackbirds in this way every season is "cruel" and have tried in vain to have it banned by French authorities.

The practice is also in the firing line of the European Union, which prohibited it in Spain in 2004 and issued a warning to France in July. Images of birds struggling to free themselves from the glue have provoked a public debate. The backlash worries Portalis, 67, who began hunting as a teenager with his grandfather, but he remains undeterred. "It is no more cruel than anything else in my opinion," he told AFP. "But maybe I see it through the eyes of love." Among the tufts of thyme and rosemary, he lays out wooden cages containing "calling" birds, or those caught in previous hunting spees. Their singing entices other birds to the area, where the glue traps lie waiting.

### Through eyes of love

According to the glue trap hunters' association, Portalis is among about 6,000 people still practising this form of hunting in France. Hidden, apart from a shock of his white hair, he keeps watch from a green hut concealed by a shrub. After four hours, a bell tied to one of the "glue branches" rings, indicating that a thrush, distinct with its black beak and

spotted chest, is stuck to the lime by its wing.

A small wren, also trapped, is released by the hunter. But he quickly takes the thrush in one hand and, with the other, sprays a solvent to dissolve the glue. Released from the lime but held tightly by Portalis, the thrush is carefully placed in a cage. The song bird joins about 30 "callers", used to attract the birds that will be the targets of his shotgun hunting trips later.

**'Play boules instead!'**

Environmentalists say that 150,000 birds die annually from traditional hunting techniques, such as glue traps and nets, at a time when Europe's bird population is free-falling. A report last year by the French National Centre for Scientific Research found that the number of birds in France's rural areas had dropped by a third in 17 years. "In the 21st century, how can we allow these barbaric, cruel and non-selective practices to continue!" said Yves Verilhac, head of the League for the Protection of Birds (LPO). "Those guys should go and play 'boules'!" he added, referring to the age-old game still played in village squares across France often by retired men. The LPO says that the glue traps are "non-selective", flouting a 2009 EU directive. Any kind of bird can get stuck on the traps, losing precious feathers, their freedom or their life, it argues. "France which sees itself as a biodiversity leader is the last country to officially use" glue traps in hunting, said Verilhac.

### Legal limits

Glue trap hunting is accused of fuelling illegal trade in thrushes. Easy to buy, the glue is also used by goldfinch traffickers, a widely poached endangered species, says the National Hunting and Wildlife Agency. Late last year, the French court with the final say on matters of administrative law rejected an LPO bid to ban lime-coated sticks, citing legal limits already in place. Another attempt to stop the current glue trap hunting season is due to go before the Paris-based court on Wednesday. — AFP

## Indonesian workshop turns waste into decorative roosters

An Indonesian workshop is turning industrial waste and chicken feathers into decorative models of roosters, in a bid to reduce waste and generate income for low-paid workers. As cocks crow in the background, workshop owner Tarjaya leads a team in crafting life-sized figures of chickens from factory waste such as foam, rubber and fabric scraps, covered with feathers gleaned from

chicken slaughterhouses.

"When I see waste, I feel pity," said Tarjaya, who goes only by one name. "It should be made into artwork, for example, so everyone can benefit and make use of it." The 35-year-old employs up to 10 people, including scavengers, itinerant traders and farm laborers. With their help, Tarjaya can produce up to 200 rooster models a month, selling each for 250,000 rupiah (\$18). Some are used as props for cockfighting training.

The rooster models are sold widely outside Tarjaya's town and even abroad, with social media serving to showcase them. Indonesia generates 175,000 ton of rubbish a day, according to its environment and forestry ministry. "This product made from recycled waste is very creative," said Herman bin Anshor, who uses the rooster dolls to help his fighting cocks train. — Reuters

## Kanye West unveils opera to premiere this month



In this file photo US rapper Kanye West attends the WSJ Magazine 2019 Innovator Awards at MOMA in New York City. — AFP

Kanye West is expanding his repertoire to include opera, premiering a new production entitled "Nebuchadnezzar" in Los Angeles on November 24. West tweeted art announcing the new production that will feature music from his Sunday Service choir over the weekend, as southern California's Hollywood Bowl venue said tickets would go on sale Monday.

Exactly what the opera, which is directed by Italian performance artist Vanessa Beecroft, will depict is unclear, but the title suggests it will focus on the ancient Babylonian king it's named for. West had discussed Nebuchadnezzar in a wide-ranging interview with Apple music while promoting his recently released gospel album and Imax film, "Jesus Is King."

The mercurial rapper, who in recent months has shed his myriad personas to reveal himself as a born-again weaver of gospel and rap, described how the ancient ruler had inspired him, saying they had both been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. "Nebuchadnezzar was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and he was still king," West said. "So not only was I diagnosed with mental illness, but mental illness was something that was used to... wash me out, to control me."

The Bible does not explicitly mention "bipolar disorder," a modern term, but the book of Daniel does describe Nebuchadnezzar as experiencing a period of mental instability and troubling dreams. Some critics link West's biblical shift to his tabloid-perfect outbursts, brush with politics, and struggles with mental health in recent years. — AFP



# Classifieds

Wednesday, November 20, 2019



**STATE OF KUWAIT**  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
www.met.gov.kw



## Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

**BY DAY:** Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 38 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

**BY NIGHT:** Cool with light to moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 40 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 19/11/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	22 °C	17 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	16 °C		
ABDULY	21 °C	12 °C		
BUBYAN	- °C	- °C		
JAHRA	22 °C	14 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	- °C	- °C		
SALMIYAH	24 °C	17 °C		
AHMADI	21 °C	18 °C		
NUWAISIB	23 °C	15 °C		
WAFRA	23 °C	15 °C		
SALMY	21 °C	10 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST					
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.	
Wednesday	11/20	Fair	21 °C	12 °C	NW 12 - 40 km/h
Thursday	11/21	Fair	23 °C	12 °C	NW-VRB 06 - 26 km/h
Friday	11/22	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear	23 °C	13 °C	NW-VRB 06 - 26 km/h
Saturday	11/23	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear	23 °C	14 °C	VRB-SE 06 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:54
Sunrise	06:16
Zuhr	11:33
Asr	14:31
Sunset	16:52
Isha	18:12

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	16 °C
MAX. RH	91 %
MIN. RH	61 %
MAX. Wind	N 39 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

## Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

## Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
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Jazeera Airways	177
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Jet Airways	22924455
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Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22456700
Air India EXPRESS	22438185/4
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
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Saudia	22426306
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## DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 20/11/2019					Departure Flights on Wednesday 20/11/2019				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
FEG	441	Asyut	00:05	KAC	614	Bahrain	12:30	NIA	1504
IGO	1757	Kochi	00:10	MSR	610	Cairo	12:45	KIS	6033
THY	772	Istanbul	00:20	CLX	7912	Luxembourg	12:45	TBZ	6606
JZR	254	Amman	00:20	UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	IAW	158
DLH	625	Dammam	00:50	KAC	774	Riyadh	13:35	RBG	554
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	212	Jeddah	13:45	JZR	115
JZR	734	Cairo	01:00	RBG	213	Sohag	13:55	SAW	702
JZR	722	Alexandria	01:00	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00	MSR	611
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	UAE	877	Sohag	14:00	THY	767
UAE	853	Dubai	01:40	JZR	152	Mashhad	14:05	UAE	872
KLM	446	Bahrain	01:45	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:10	CLX	7912
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	RBG	218
KKK	1268	Istanbul	01:55	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	KNE	382
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	QTR	1078	Doha	14:25	GFA	222
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	364	Colombo	14:35	KAC	673
KAC	414	Bangkok	02:40	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:35	JZR	103
THY	1404	AYT	02:45	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:45	FDB	060
PGT	860	Istanbul	02:50	JZR	222	Riyadh	14:45	UAE	878
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:50	KAC	562	Amman	14:50	QTR	1079
JZR	502	Lahore	02:55	KAC	618	Doha	14:50	SVA	501
KAC	156	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:50	JZR	125
RJA	648	Amman	03:05	KAC	788	Jeddah	14:55	KNE	530
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	512	Mashhad	15:00	SVA	505
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	KAC	118	New York	15:00	FDB	052
NIA	1604	Luxor	03:10	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:00	JZR	405
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	412	Bangkok	15:10	KAC	743
KAC	418	Manila	03:20	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	KAC	775
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:20	ABY	128
OHY	352	Istanbul	04:00	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35	ETD	304
KAC	382	Delhi	04:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	OMA	646
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	KAC	546	Cairo	15:50	KAC	785
RBG	1153	Asyut	04:10	SVA	504	Madinah	16:00	KAC	619
ETH	3424	Bahrain	04:15	FEG	341	Sohag	16:00	FEG	242
KAC	796	Madinah	04:25	JZR	732	Cairo	16:10	MSR	576
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:25	FDB	051	Dubai	16:10	SVA	505
JZR	1738	Cairo	04:45	MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	16:10	FDB	052
JZR	404	Hyderabad	04:50	KAC	502	Beirut	16:15	QTR	1073
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:05	QTR	1072	Doha	16:15	KAC	361
FDB	069	Dubai	05:05	SAW	705	Damascus	17:00	KAC	155
IGO	1759	Delhi	05:10	JZR	116	Doha	17:05	KAC	503
THY	770	Istanbul	05:20	OMS	225	Muscat	17:10	UAE	858
JZR	402	Mumbai	05:25	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:10	KAC	283
KAC	344	Chennai	05:30	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	OMS	226
RBG	215	Sohag	05:35	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:35	KAC	343
UAE	873	Dubai	05:40	KAC	158	Istanbul	17:50	KAC	381
KAC	552	Cairo	05:45	JZR	104	Bahrain	18:00	SAW	706
JZR	112	Doha	05:50	QTR	1080	Doha	18:10	SVA	511
BAW	157	London	06:10	MSR	620	Paris	18:10	KAC	615
JZR	708	Luxor	06:15	UAE	875	Dubai	18:20	JZR	721
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:15	FDB	063	Dubai	18:20	JZR	127
JZR	714	Sohag	06:20	GFA	217	Bahrain	18:25	JZR	403
KAC	678	Dubai	06:40	RJA	640	Amman	19:05	JZR	733
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	JZR	306	Istanbul	19:20	JZR	253
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:05	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:20	QTR	1081
IGO	1766	Mumbai	07:10	KAC	744	Dammam	19:25	MSR	621
KAC	358	Kochi	07:10	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45	FDB	064
FDB	053	Dubai	07:25	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:45	GFA	218
JZR	724	Alexandria	07:50	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	331
KAC	354	Bengaluru	08:00	KAC	104	London	20:00	ABY	124
QTR	1084	Doha	08:00	KAC	166	Rome	20:00	RJA	641
KAC	384	Trivandrum	08:05	KNE	381	Taif	20:00	FDB	058
UAE	855	Dubai	08:10	OMA	647	Muscat	20:05	KAC	351
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	08:25	NIA	1503	Asyut	20:10	JZR	401
OMA	641	Muscat	08:50	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:10	UAE	876
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00	MEA	402	Beirut	20:10	KNE	232
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:15	JZR	126	Dubai	20:20	KAC	353
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	KAC	620	Doha	20:30	OMA	648
GOW	061	CNN	09:30	QTR	1088	Doha	20:40	NIA	1406
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	RBG	217	Asyut	20:55	MEA	403
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:00	KAC	301
JZR	410	Delhi	09:50	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:00	RBG	214
SVR	341	Damascus	10:00	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:00	FDB	059
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:20	UAE	859	Muscat	21:10	QTR	1089
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ALK	229	London	21:15	DHX	171
MEA	404	Beirut	10:55	KAC	168	Colombo	21:15	KAC	205
QTR	1074	Doha	11:00	THY	764	Paris	21:20	KLM	445
KIS	6032	Mashhad	11:00	GFA	616	Istanbul	21:30	ETD	308
JZR	1736	Cairo	11:05	KAC	219	Bahrain	21:40	ALK	230
JZR	114	Doha	11:10	QTR	564	Amman	21:50	THY	1413
IGO	1755	CNN	11:30	JZR	1082	Doha	22:05	UAE	860
NIA	1405	Sohag	11:30	JAV	786	Jeddah	22:15	KAC	383
JZR	122	Dubai	11:45	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:20	JZR	407
KIS	6032	Mashhad	11:45	AIC	975	Bahrain	22:25	GFA	220
TBZ	6605	Mashhad	11:55	SVA	502	Jeddah	22:45	KAC	783
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	JZR	128	Dubai	22:50	KAC	551
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	MSC	411	Asyut	23:15	KAC	411
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:30	MSR	614	Cairo	23:30	JAV	622
THY	766	Istanbul	12:30	FDB	071	Dubai	23:35	QTR	1083



# Besieged by protesters, Lebanon assembly postpones key session

**BEIRUT:** Lebanon’s parliament, besieged by angry protesters yesterday, for a second time postponed a session to discuss draft laws which critics charge would let corrupt politicians off the hook. After a morning of noisy demonstrations outside the chamber, and after several political parties had said they would boycott the session, parliament official Adnane Daher appeared before TV cameras. “The session has been postponed to a date to be determined later,” he said, citing “exceptional ... security conditions”.

“This is a new achievement for the revolution,” cheered Mohamed Ataya, a 28-year-old demonstrator, vowing that no session would be held “as long as the people control the street”. From early morning, riot police had faced off with hundreds of noisy demonstrators and sporadic scuffles broke out outside the assembly, where activists tried to block MPs’ convoys.

Warning shots were heard as one convoy passed through the crowd, a broadcast on private LBC television showed. Demonstrators blamed an MP’s body-guard for firing them. “Revolution, revolution,” chanted the protesters, punching the air with their fists and waving Lebanese flags, in the latest rally in over a month of street protests. “This parliament is ours,” one woman shouted through a megaphone as others banged pots and pans.

Lebanon has since Oct 17 been rocked by an unprecedented wave of popular street revolt that have cut across sectarian lines. What started with protests against a plan to tax online phone calls made through WhatsApp and other applications has turned into a broader popular revolt against the perceived ineptitude and corruption of the entire ruling class. Amid the crisis the prime minister, Saad Hariri, bowed to street pres-

sure and resigned on Oct 29, but the parliamentary consultations needed to form a new government have yet to start.

A former finance minister, Mohamad Safadi, who had been considered to replace Hariri, has withdrawn his bid for the post after more protests. President Michel Aoun - whose powers include initiating parliamentary consultations to appoint a new prime minister - said he was open to a government that would include representatives of the popular movement.

“The new government will be political and will include technocrats and representatives of the popular movement,” he was quoted saying on the presidency’s Twitter account, during a meeting with the UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Jan Kubis. “I am ready to meet with the movement’s representatives and inform them of my efforts to respond to their requests.”

Yesterday’s plans for a parliamentary session, which had already postponed by a week, had further stoked anger as MPs were scheduled to discuss a bill to grant amnesty to thousands convicted of a range of offences. The demonstrators see the draft law as a way to clear powerful figures charged with or convicted of crimes ranging from tax evasion to breaches of environmental regulations. “They want an amnesty to escape (charges) of tax evasion and to release criminals onto the streets,” said one activist who gave her name as Tracy, 24, and who criticized the “illegitimate” parliament.

The non-government group Legal Agenda labelled the proposed law “a great danger”. The parliamentarians had also been due to consider a bill to create a court specializing in financial crimes and the mismanagement of public funds. Its judges would be appointed



**BEIRUT:** Lebanese anti-government protesters sit on the ground as they take part in a demonstration near the parliament in the capital’s downtown district yesterday. — AFP

by the legislature, raising further fears of conflicts of interest among protesters.

Lebanon’s street protests, including widespread roadblocks with burning car tyres, have at times brought the country close to a standstill, and sent the already struggling economy deeper into crisis. Amid the turmoil, banks stayed shut for weeks and restricted

withdrawals, foreign currency transactions and access to dollars, often causing clients’ tempers to flare. In rare good news for Lebanese citizens, banks reopened yesterday. The Federation of Syndicates of Banks Employees in Lebanon had on Monday announced the end of a strike, saying new security measures had been agreed with authorities to protect banks. — AFP

## In the desert of Dubai, salmon...

Continued from Page 1

to say the least. “Creating the (right) environment for the salmon was the hardest thing we faced,” Mubarak told AFP. “But we came up with the idea of dark water that resembles deep water, a strong current like the ocean with the same salinity and temperature of the Atlantic.”

Fish Farm bought some 40,000 fingerlings - or juvenile fish - from a hatchery in Scotland and thousands more eggs from Iceland to raise in open tanks in Dubai’s southern district of Jebel Ali. Salmon are born in freshwater but live in salt water for much of their lives before returning to freshwater to spawn. At their home in the United Arab Emirates, the tanks are filled with sea water that is cleaned and filtered.

Fish Farm produces 10,000 to 15,000 kilos of salmon every month. It was established in 2013 with the support of Dubai’s Crown Prince Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, to farm salmon and other fish including Japanese amberjack, which is used to prepare sushi. Mubarak said that because of the technical challenge, salmon-raising remains the “greatest production” of the farm, which supplies to Dubai and the rest of the United Arab Emirates, where the population includes millions of expatriates.

“The UAE imports around 92 percent of its fish from abroad, and the goal today is to be able to fulfill (that demand) for imports internally, so that we have food security,” Mubarak said. “In case there is an interrup-

## Taleban release two hostages...

Continued from Page 1

southern province bordering Pakistan, earlier yesterday, an insurgent source told AFP. They were freed at around 10:00 am and flown out of Zabul on American helicopters, according to a local police source. American media cited King’s family as saying he was receiving medical care in US custody.

The insurgents were released in Doha, where the Taleban maintain a political office, a tweet from their spokesman in the Qatari capital Suhail Shaheen confirmed. The Taleban’s main spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said the transfer of the Taleban prisoners “is complete, and they have arrived where they were supposed to come”.

The swap could indicate a breakthrough in stalled efforts to bring the Taleban to the negotiating table with the government in Kabul and begin work towards a political settlement ending their 18-year insurgency. The joint statement from Morrison and Australian foreign secretary Marise Payne called it a “confidence-building” measure they hoped would “set the stage for a ceasefire and intra-Afghan dialogue”. Mujahid said the swap was “a step forward in good-will and confidence-building measures that can aid the peace process”. The American University in Kabul said it “shares the relief” of the hostages’ families.

Anas Haqqani, whose older brother Sirajuddin is the

tion, cyclone or floods, the UAE will be able to supply itself. This is the main objective.” Another goal is to be environmentally friendly and, in a move also motivated by the high cost of electricity, Fish Farm has plans to go solar-powered.

The ecological pros and cons of farming fish on land, compared to raising them in rivers and seas, are hotly debated, as is the alternative of harvesting wild fish. “There are animal welfare concerns about keeping fish whose natural behavior is to swim freely in seas and rivers in closed tanks,” said Jessica Sinclair Taylor, from Feedback Global, a London-based environmental group. “There are also concerns about the energy requirements and therefore carbon emissions.” But she said that on the plus side, land-based farming prevents water pollution in lakes or seas where salmon farms are sometimes sited, and where waste and run-off can damage marine ecosystems.

According to the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the UAE imported 2.3 billion dirhams (\$630 million) of fish products, crustaceans and mollusks in 2017 and exported 280 million dirhams’ worth. Fish Farm, the UAE’s only fish farm, hopes to meet at least 50 percent of the country’s needs within two years, said Mubarak.

In April, Fish Farm began selling its products in supermarkets. Despite its decidedly unnatural origins, the salmon is marked “100 percent organic” because of the fish feed and the absence of antibiotics in a closed environment. “It is (more expensive), but I also think about the quality - I’ve tried different salmon before and this is less greasy and my family prefers this one,” said Katja, a German residing in Dubai. She said that UAE is “making really great efforts to produce not only fish but vegetables and other foods locally, and I think I should really support that”. — AFP

deputy Taleban leader and head of the Haqqani network, one of the militant group’s deadliest factions, was seized in 2014. Afghan authorities accuse Anas of being a high-level player in the network. The Taleban has long demanded his release, insisting he is a student. The other two freed Taleban are Haji Mali Khan, believed to be the uncle of Sirajuddin Haqqani, and Abdul Rashid, said to be the brother of Mohammad Nabi Omari, a member of the Taleban’s political office in Qatar.

Mujahid said the Taleban had also released 10 Afghan soldiers along with the Western hostages. When Ghani had first announced the potential exchange on Nov 12, he said that the release was conditional, and that Kabul had taken steps to ensure the militants would not return to the front line. He said he hoped the swap would “pave the way” for the start of unofficial direct talks between his government and the Taleban, who have long refused to negotiate with Kabul.

Since Sept 2018 Washington and the Taleban have been holding direct talks, seeking an agreement that many hoped would see US troops begin leaving Afghanistan and the militants start negotiations with Kabul. They were on the verge of a deal when US President Donald Trump scuttled the talks in September, citing Taleban violence. Most observers agree that a political settlement is the only way towards lasting peace in Afghanistan, and both the US and the Taleban left the door open for talks to resume. Pakistan’s prime minister Imran Khan, whose government had helped facilitate the talks between the insurgents and Washington, also said he hoped the release would give a “boost of confidence” to all sides to re-engage. — AFP

MPs welcomed the premier’s appointment and called for forming a strong government with a clear reform program. MP Khaled Al-Otaibi said the new premier should adopt a new course aimed at improving the economic and social situations of the Kuwaiti people. He said the new premier should work toward achieving national reconciliation by approving a general amnesty for politicians and activists who are very dedicated to the country. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said the new premier should present a comprehensive reform program and fulfill the aspirations of the Kuwaiti people.

## Mum knows best: Homemade soup...

Continued from Page 1

ingredients, including chicken, beef, beetroot and cabbage. Much to the pleasure of the vegetarians involved in the study, Baum noted, the veggie-only soups showed similar results to the meat-based ones. Baum said he had wanted to teach children the process through which scientific research can turn an herbal remedy into a synthetically produced medicine.

## US slammed for backing...

Continued from Page 1

and norms, said a top Kuwaiti diplomat yesterday. In a brief comment in reaction to Pompeo’s statements regarding the status of the settlements, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah affirmed that international resolutions must be respected so that efforts for peace in the Middle East will not be foiled.

Pompeo said that after legal consultation Washington had concluded the establishment of settlements was “not, per se, inconsistent with international law”, saying he trusted the Israeli courts to decide. The decision puts the United States at odds with virtually the whole of the rest of the international community and breaks with UN Security Council resolutions declaring settlements to be illegal as they are built in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Israeli courts, however, have declared most major settlements legal. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said the US decision did “not modify existing international law, nor its interpretation by the International Court of Justice and the UN Security Council”. The EU reiterated it still considers all settlement activity illegal.

Netanyahu visited the Gush Etzion settlement bloc in the West Bank south of Jerusalem yesterday. “Here we are on a historic day with another tremendous achievement for the State of Israel,” he told settler leaders, according to a statement. “The Trump administration has corrected an historic injustice and lined up with truth and justice.”

More than 600,000 Israelis live in settlements in east Jerusalem and the West Bank, alongside more than three million Palestinians. Israel seized control of the territories, seen as pivotal parts of any future Palestinian state, in the 1967 Six-Day War. Settlements are seen as one of the most difficult issues in the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The announcement is the latest in a series of pro-Israeli moves by US President Donald Trump’s administration, including recognizing the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. Analysts say it will further

## Jleeb ‘cleanup’ in full swing...

Continued from Page 1

Speaking to the press after the campaign, Manfouhi said a great difference was noticed in the area, and that the results will be studied and assessed over the coming three months. “We expect to close down 2,700 stores by the end of the campaign,” he noted, adding the team will also disconnect electricity to all houses used as central kitchens, factories or blacksmith work-

embolden the settlement movement and may fend off potential legal moves against Israel. The Arab League called it an “extremely adverse development”. The Palestinian Authority - which considers the US biased and has rejected the Trump administration as a mediator if peace talks are ever revived - called for an emergency meeting of the body.

The only two Arab states to have signed peace treaties with Israel - Egypt and Jordan - also sharply criticized the US policy shift, with Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi warning of “dangerous consequences”. Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said they would take a series of measures to oppose it, including calling for a United Nations Security Council debate. “We are going to the (UN) General Assembly and we will ask... the International Criminal Court to open an official judicial investigation,” he added.

The US policy shift was widely seen as an attempt to change the legal context for a series of suits and complaints against Israel. The European Union’s top court last week ruled that EU countries must identify products made in Israeli settlements on their labels. The ICC is expected to take key decisions on two cases against Israel in the coming weeks, including relating to Israeli settlements.

Ofer Zalzburg, senior Middle East analyst with the International Crisis Group think-tank, said the US was trying to weaken the legal pressure on its ally. “The Trump administration is trying to unravel international consensus on this issue of the illegality of settlements,” he said. “It adds to a deepening politicization of international law, making it appear to be malleable to political opinions.”

Israeli settlers, who overwhelmingly form part of Netanyahu’s rightwing constituency, said the US policy change paved the way for the annexation of West Bank settlements into Israel. “The illegality of settlements has always been stated as a fact based upon an international consensus. The breaking of that consensus is important,” said Avi Bell, senior fellow at the right-wing Kohelet Policy Forum in Israel.

Erekat said it was only the latest move by the US to try to force the Palestinians to capitulate and give up their claims to an independent state. “They wanted us on our knees and they used every trick - internally, externally, regionally - to put pressure on us. We stand tall and we will stand tall.” — Agencies

shops. Manfouhi added teams from the ministry of electricity and water will also be present to take legal measures against electric cable thieves.

Manfouhi said after assessing this three-month campaign, another three-month plan will be set to put an end to all forms of violations. “Violators are punishable by various penalties including referral to investigations or to the public prosecutor and disconnecting power,” he elaborated. He said that the official population of the area is 200,000, but it seems many more people reside there, including illegal residents with expired residency visas. Farwaniya Municipality Director Mohammed Sarkhouh stressed that the campaign will not be the last in the area.



Sports

# Raanta's first shutout of the season as Coyotes blank Kings

## Capitals use balance to blast Ducks

**GLENDAL:** Derek Stepan scored his second goal in as many games, and Conor Garland had a goal and an assist in the Arizona Coyotes' 3-0 win over the Los Angeles Kings on Monday night in Glendale, Ariz. Jakob Chychrun also scored, Christian Dvorak and Nick Schmaltz had two assists each, and Antti Raanta made 31 saves for the Coyotes, who have won four of their past five games. The Kings' three-game winning streak, their longest of the season thus far, came to an end.

Raanta, the No. 2 goalie for the Coyotes, recorded his first shutout of the season. Together with Darcy Kuemper's shutout on Saturday night in a win over the Calgary Flames, the duo became the first goaltending tandem in franchise history to post back-to-back shutouts. Arizona has won eight of its past 12 games against Los Angeles.

Garland scored his team-leading 10th goal of the season just 3:12 into the game when he put in a deflected shot from Dvorak. Garland's 23 career goals surpassed Juha Ylonen for the second-most by a Coyotes fifth-round draft pick in franchise history.

Stepan finished a series of pinpoint passes around the perimeter and into the center for a power-play goal at 14:48 of the first, with Dvorak and Phil Kessel notching assists. The Coyotes made it 3-0 midway through the second period on Chychrun's fifth goal of the season, off a no-look pass from Garland. Schmaltz's second assist on the night raised his team-high point total to 18.

Arizona had converted only one of its previous 26 chances on the power play until going 2-for-4 on Monday. Los Angeles went 0-for-4 on power plays in the loss. Raanta turned away a breakaway attempt by

the Kings' Austin Wagner with 10:32 to play in the third period. Jack Campbell made 24 saves for Los Angeles.

Meanwhile, Alex Ovechkin was one of five Capitals who scored a goal as Washington defeated the visiting Anaheim Ducks 5-2 Monday night.

Richard Panik, Chandler Stephenson, Jakub Vrana and Tom Wilson also each scored a goal as Washington came up with at least one in each of the three periods.

Goalie Braden Holtby made 32 saves and improved to 10-0-1 in his past 11 starts. He has won seven in a row. The Capitals now are 13-1-2 in their past 16 games, and they improved to 7-1-1 in the month of November. Also, they've won two in a row since losing to Montreal at home on Friday, the team's lone loss this month.

Panik gave Washington an early lead with his first goal as a member of the Capitals — and it came 50 seconds into the contest. He took a quick pass from Travis Boyd and fired a high shot past goalie John Gibson from the left circle.

The Caps took control with two goals in the second period, from Ovechkin and Stephenson, for a 3-0 lead. Ovechkin's goal came on a power play at 6:39 of the period from the left circle. Evgeny Kuznetsov set up the play by threading a perfect pass to Ovechkin through traffic from the right side.

Washington made it 3-0 on the Stephenson goal with 34 seconds left in the second period. He took a pass from Garnet Hathaway and beat Gibson from between the circles. After making the pass, Hathaway then jumped into a brawl that took the officials several minutes to control and figure out. He came away with a match penalty as seven penalties were handed out overall. There even was some question about if the goal



GLENDAL: Arizona Coyotes celebrate victory after the match.

would stand up, but eventually it did.

Vrana scored his goal in the third period before Sam Steel and Nicolas Deslauriers got goals for the

Ducks that cut the margin to 4-2. Wilson's empty-net goal locked it up for Washington with 1:11 remaining. —Reuters

## Schoolboy seamer Naseem pitches up for unlikely debut in Australia

**MELBOURNE:** Teenage tearaways are part of the fabric of Pakistan cricket but schoolboy seamer Naseem Shah could redefine the term "wunderkind" if selected during the test series in Australia.

The 16-year-old from Lower Dir district on the border of Afghanistan would eclipse former home captain Ian Craig as the youngest test debutant on Australian soil. Craig took the field as a 17-year-old against South Africa in 1953, scoring a half-century at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Naseem, with only seven first class matches under his belt, is the youngest of three teenagers competing for a pace bowling slot in the opening match at the Gabba on

Thursday. Uncapped Muhammad Musa and another 19-year-old, Shaheen Afridi, who has three tests to his credit, are the other two jostling in a pace unit that also includes the more seasoned pair of Mohammad Abbas and Imran Khan.

Coach Misbah-ul-Haq and his fellow selectors have been criticised by Pakistan media for placing too much expectation on such young shoulders, particularly against an ascendant team that thrives on home pitches.

But the Pakistan staff believe boldness is key to transforming their seventh-ranked side into a global force. Gambling on youth has seen some of the nation's emerging talents suffer bruising initiations in the past and ultimately end up left by the wayside.

Yet it has also unearthed a number of gems. Waqar Younis, the country's second-highest test wicket-taker after Wasim Akram, made his 1989 debut against India in Karachi a day before his 18th birthday.

He took four wickets in the first innings and went on to amass 373 victims in a career of 87 matches. Now Pakistan's bowling coach, Waqar said Naseem reminded him of Australia's fiery fast bowler Dennis Lillee.

"He's got a very similar action. He's not as big as Dennis — Dennis was a big guy — but when he gets it right, he's a handful," Waqar told local media last week.

### NO BAGGAGE

Australia seamer Pat Cummins, who took a match-winning seven-wicket haul as an 18-year-old debutant against South Africa, said Naseem's inexperience could work for him. "Sometimes that's almost better, when you start off a little bit naive," Cummins told reporters.

"You just want to go out and bowl fast and not be clouded by the baggage of a few long days in the dirt." Naseem is carrying a heavy burden of grief, however, following the death of his mother last week.

He was offered the chance to head home but elected to stay with the Pakistan group to fulfil his family's wishes for his career, team management said. After missing a day of the tour game against Australia A while on compassionate leave, he returned to the side and bowled eight overs, dismissing test opener Marcus Harris with a brutal, rising delivery.

With the Gabba usually serving up a fast and bouncy wicket, Naseem could hardly ask for a better pitch for his first test outing if handed a cap. Head coach Misbah says Naseem could be the tour's "surprise package" but warned the 16-year-old not to get too carried away with the fire and brimstone against players of the calibre of master batsman Steve Smith.

"Naseem is a fine bowler, a young bowler, but at the same time cricket discipline remains the same," Misbah told reporters. "No matter how quick you are, I think if you execute your plans well, then you have a chance." —Reuters

## Smith has no problem with short ban for ball-tamperer Pooran



Steve Smith

**BRISBANE:** Steve Smith insists he does not feel "hard done by" after the West Indies' Nicholas Pooran received a four-match ban for ball-tampering compared to the master Australian batsman's year-long suspension.

The talented Pooran was last week suspended by the International Cricket Council for four Twenty20 internationals for "changing the condition of the ball" in a one-day match against Afghanistan in India.

Smith and David Warner were exiled by Cricket Australia for a year, while Cameron Bancroft was suspended for nine months, for their part in a plot to use sandpaper to alter the ball during a Test against South Africa last year.

Smith said he had no issues with the wide disparity in the punishments. "Everyone is different, every board is different, and the way they deal with certain issues," he told reporters ahead of the opening Test against Pakistan in Brisbane this week — his first Test at home since the tampering scandal.

"For me, I copped it on the chin... it is what it is. "I don't feel hard done by. It was a long time ago now. I've moved past it and I'm focusing on the present," he added.

Smith and Pooran played together for the Barbados Tridents and the former Australian skipper said he hoped his ex-teammate would learn from his mistake. "I know Nicholas, I've played a bit of cricket with him and he's a talented player and someone with a bright future," said Smith, who bounced back from his ban in remarkable fashion by scoring 774 runs in four Ashes Tests against England this year.

"I think he'll learn from his mistake and move past it." Pooran admitted to "changing the condition of the ball" after video footage showed him scratching the surface with his thumbnail against Afghanistan in Lucknow last week.

"I recognise that I made an extreme error in judgement and I fully accept the ICC penalty," he said. "I want to assure everyone that this is an isolated incident and it will not be repeated. I promise to learn from this and come back stronger and wiser." —AFP

## New Zealand and England put cricket rivalry to the Test

**MOUNT MAUNGANUI:** New Zealand and England will take their cricketing rivalry into the Test arena tomorrow after finding themselves evenly matched in recent limited-overs thrillers. England have bragging rights after winning a rollercoaster World Cup final in July, then edging the Black Caps 3-2 in a desperately close Twenty20 series completed earlier this month.

Both the one-day decider and T20 series needed tie-breakers to find a winner and there will be no shortage of mutual respect when the rivals face off again Thursday in the First Test at Mount Maunganui.

On paper, there again appears to be little to separate the teams, with New Zealand second in the Test rankings and England third. But England skipper Joe Root is painfully aware that his team underperformed when it lost a two-Test series in New Zealand last year after underestimating the

Black Caps' bowlers on their home turf.

Pacemen Trent Boult and Tim Southee bundled the tourists out for 58 in the first innings of the opening Test as England tried to play what Root described as "fast forward" cricket. England's skipper said his team would be taking a more measured approach this time, with batsmen placing an emphasis on protecting their wickets.

"We have to be prepared to play some attritional cricket at times," he said. "We have to try to bat longer... it would be nice to get used to batting for 120 overs more regularly, especially in the first innings."

**'EXTREME TALENT'**

The series will not count towards the World Test Championship, giving new England coach Chris Silverwood room to experiment in his first Test series in charge. He is expected to hand opening batsman Dom Sibley his debut, partnering Rory Burns, with Root moving down to fourth in the order.

New Zealand will take the opportunity to blood speedster Lockie Ferguson, who has already excelled in limited overs internationals and was described as "an extreme talent" by short-ball specialist Neil Wagner.

## Bangladesh bans Shahadat for five years

**DHAKA:** The Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday banned former national team fast bowler Shahadat Hossain for five years, two of them suspended, after he assaulted a teammate in a match.

The temperamental Shahadat was reported by umpires after he was seen to slap and kick a teammate during a National Cricket League match on Sunday. The national federation suspended two years of the ban but Shahadat, who admitted a charge of "physical assault", was also fined 300,000 taka (\$3,540), the board said.

Shahadat, 33, attacked young bowler Arafat Sunny Jr during a game between Dhaka and Khulna after an argument over how to shine the ball, a board official said. "Considering his past behaviour we decided to punish him for five years. The last two years of his ban will remain suspended," said BCB technical committee chief Minhajul Abedin.

Shahadat could have been banned for life. Shahadat, who played 38 Tests and 51 one-day internationals for Bangladesh, spent nearly two months in detention in 2015 after he and his wife were accused of torturing an 11-year-old girl they employed as a maid. They were cleared when it came to trial however.

Shahadat hit the headlines again in 2018 when he allegedly beat a rickshaw driver for hitting his car in Dhaka. —AFP



DHAKA: File photo taken on October 5, 2015 Bangladeshi security personnel escort fugitive cricketer Shahadat Hossain (L) after he surrendered in Dhaka. The Bangladesh Cricket Board yesterday banned Shahadat for five years after he assaulted a teammate in a match. —AFP



Sports

# Russia beat reigning champions Croatia in Davis Cup opener

## Canada claims 2-1 victory over well-fancied Italy

**MADRID:** Karen Khachanov and Andrey Rublev helped Russia open the inaugural Davis Cup Finals with a 3-0 victory over defending champions Croatia in Madrid on Monday. World number 17 Khachanov clinched the point for Russia by fighting back to beat Croatian number one Borna Coric 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4, after Rublev had earlier seen off Borna Gojo 6-3, 6-3.

"When you're playing not only for yourself, but for your country, you have to fight harder," said Khachanov. Russia, who are without US Open runner-up Daniil Medvedev due to exhaustion, can wrap up a place in the quarter-finals with victory over Rafael Nadal's Spain in their second Group B tie today.

The 18 nations have been split into six groups of three at the Caja Magica, with the pool winners and two best runners-up to play in the last eight of the first edition of the revamped tournament. The teams face off in two best-of-three-set singles matches and one doubles rubber in each tie.

Khachanov and Rublev completed the clean sweep later on Monday with a 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 doubles win over Ivan Dodig and Nikola Mektic.

### CANADA DOWN ITALY

Canada claimed a 2-1 victory over well-fancied Italy to strike first in Group F. World number 12 Fabio Fognini slumped to a 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 defeat by Vasek Pospisil, ranked 150th, before rising star Denis Shapovalov edged out Matteo Berrettini 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/5).

"I'm really happy to get the win against a player like

Matteo who has had such a good season," said Shapovalov. "I always love representing my country... It's not often you get to play as a team, so it's amazing."

Italy, who won their only Davis Cup title in 1976, were the favourites in Group F with Fognini and Berrettini both having enjoyed excellent seasons. The 20-year-old Shapovalov saved three set points before snatching the first set in a tie-break, only for Berrettini to level the match in a second-set breaker.

A clash without a single break of serve, was decided by another tie-break, with Shapovalov reeling off the last three points to win after two hours and 52 minutes on court.

Berrettini and Fognini boosted Italy's hopes of making the quarters with a hard-fought doubles success over Shapovalov and Pospisil, winning 6-2, 3-6, 6-3. Canada take on the United States today, with Italy facing the Americans the following day.

Belgium made a victorious start in Group D with back-to-back singles wins against Colombia. The South Americans are playing at the top level of Davis Cup tennis for the first time, having never played in the old World Group.

Steve Darcis saw off Santiago Giraldo 6-3, 6-2, before world number 11 David Goffin had to battle back from a set down to avoid a shock against 194th-ranked Daniel Elahi Galan Riveros, winning 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

But the world number one doubles pairing of Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah grabbed a historic win for Colombia by battling past Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3). —AFP



MADRID: Croatia's Ivan Dodig and Croatia's Nikola Mektic return the ball to Russia's Karen Khachanov and Russia's Andrey Rublev during the doubles tennis match between Croatia and Russia at the Davis Cup Madrid Finals 2019 in Madrid yesterday. —AFP

## NBK to award more than 100 participants during the Walkathon

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) will award more than 100 participants in the 25th Annual Walkathon alongside the grand draw for two new Renault cars from Al Bابتابت Group. The Walkathon is scheduled to kick off on Saturday 7th, December 2019. Titled "One Step Can Change Your Life", NBK Walkathon this year will hold great surprises. Participants can register online, through NBKWalkathon.com. Applicants can then collect their assigned T-shirt and number at the NBK's registration center at the Green Island parking on the Gulf Road starting from Thursday 28th of November. The number for each participant will contain a step-counting chip. The Walkathon will be held under the supervision of the referees of the Kuwait Amateur Athletic Federation (KAAF).



Abdul Mohsin Al Rushaid

Abdul Mohsen Al Rushaid, NBK Public Relations Executive Manager said, "the participation in NBK's Walkathon is increasing year after year, and we are extremely thrilled to take our involvement with this exciting event to a new level."

"Our commitment towards being connected with the community is the reason why we feel it is important for us to maintain the Walkathon annually," added Al Rushaid. Ten winners will be selected from each of the 10 categories of participants. NBK opened a racing category for participants aged 60 years old and above and a category for special needs participants to encourage a healthier lifestyle among all members of the society. It is worth mentioning that, the walk for both the female and male participants will start from the Green Island on the Gulf Road to the Shuwaikh Beach Park, parallel to the Gulf Road, next to KPC building for a distance of 11 Km.

NBK strongly supports sporting events and encourages sporting activities as means to promote a healthier and more active lifestyle for members of the community. Throughout the years, NBK also organized several social awareness programs including educational, environmental, health and many other active initiatives.

## Argentina overpower Chile in Davis Cup

**MADRID:** Argentina secured a unassailable 2-0 lead over Chile in their opening group stage tie of the revamped Davis Cup in Madrid yesterday, courtesy spotless performances in their singles matches.

The International Tennis Federation has faced criticism for meddling with the partisan atmosphere generated by the "home and away" format and replacing it with a soccer World Cup-style format featuring 18 nations, in one city, battling over seven days to be crowned champions. But the Argentina supporters in their blue and white stripes packed the Centre Court and cheered almost every point as Guido Pella eased past Chilean Nicolas Jarry 6-4 6-3 in the opening match.

Diego Schwartzman produced a ruthless display to beat Cristian Garin 6-2 6-2, ensuring the 2016 champions started the campaign with a convincing victory in Group C.

"It's the end of the season but I think I played one of the best matches for sure of the year, maybe in my career," said Schwartzman. "I think Guido helped me a lot to be more confident in this match and I played unreal tennis." —Reuters

## Kazakhstan to host Pakistan Davis Cup tie: AITA

**MUMBAI:** The International Tennis Federation has rejected Pakistan's appeal against the decision to move its Davis Cup tie with India to a neutral venue and the fixture will be played in Kazakhstan, the Indian tennis association (AITA) told Reuters yesterday.

The Asia/Oceania Group I tie, originally scheduled for Sept. 14-15, was postponed by the governing body to Nov. 29-30 following a security review amid political tensions between the bit-

ter neighbours.

Pakistan expelled India's ambassador and suspended bilateral trade and all public transport links with its neighbour in August after New Delhi removed "special status" from its portion of the contested region of Kashmir.

Earlier this month, the ITF accepted India's request to shift the tie away from Islamabad but Pakistan appealed. "The ITF has informed us that Pakistan's appeal has been rejected and the tie will be held at Astana (renamed Nur-Sultan) in Kazakhstan," AITA General Secretary Hironmoy Chatterjee said by telephone.

The nuclear-armed neighbours have fought two wars over Kashmir since gaining independence from Britain in 1947. They came close to a third in February after a deadly attack on Indian police by a Pakistan-based militant group resulted in air strikes by both countries.

## Fadi Andari a miracle in sports

**BEIRUT:** He has been called a miracle in sports. Professional champion Fadi Andari has won 10 championships in 2019. The natural bodybuilding and martial arts champion Andari fulfilled a set of achievements at the world championships after winning four world professional titles in Muay Thai (Thai boxing) in Bangkok against Thai pro champion, taking his title in a second round knockout. Earlier they fought at two world titles because it was a main event. The winner got the title of Muay Thai Live the Legend.

After the bout, Andari had knee injury, a broken toe and bleeding nose, and was rushed on a wheelchair to hospital and then to the airport to participate in his second world championship in bodybuilding and physique event within the next 24 hours on Nov 5 event which was held on Jeju Island in South Korea.

He won for the best natural body building, physique, fitness, athletic, sports physique and performance. He was selected for his outstanding contributions to the international development of bodybuilding and physique fitness among champions throughout the world in bodybuilding and physique sports championships.

Andari was called a miracle in sports when he won the four titles in Muay Thai, and after 24 hours playing fitness physique sports and winning the six titles. It's was the first time an athlete participated in bodybuilding and before it in a competitive martial arts match.

This is his fifth year in a row winning championships and breaking records in natural bodybuilding physique, sports fitness championship and kickboxing Muay Thai in a short period of time between these different games, which have different targets and preparations and is very hard to do and win.

On Nov 13, 2019, Andari was honored by the Lebanese Ambassador in South Korea Antoine Azzam for his great achievements.



team visit Pakistan when Pakistan has assured them of extremely high level security protocol," he said on his Instagram.

"However, if ITF does not correct their wrong decision then as a protest against this unjust, unfair and biased decision I want to raise my voice and hereby announce not to participate in this tie if it takes place outside Pakistan."

India will be without top singles player Prajnesh Gunneswaran, who is getting married during the tie, while doubles specialist Rohan Bopanna has pulled out due to a shoulder injury.

An Indian tennis team last travelled to Pakistan in 1964 for a Davis Cup tie, defeating the hosts 4-0, while Pakistan lost 3-2 on their last visit to India in 2006. Other sports have also been affected by the tension, with bilateral cricketing ties suspended since 2008. —Reuters

## Australia under-23 players banned

**MELBOURNE:** Football Federation Australia has handed lengthy bans to four members of the country's Olympic squad for "unprofessional conduct" at the end of an under-23 tournament in Cambodia in March following a complaint from a woman. Nathaniel Atkinson, Lachlan Wales and Brandon Wilson were banned until Aug. 10 2020, meaning they will miss the Tokyo Olympics. Captain Riley McGree was banned until April 1 next year.

All four would participate in "education courses and counselling" as directed by the governing body, the FFA said in a statement yesterday. The four were found to have breached the FFA's code of conduct during a night out at the end of the Asian Football Confederation U-23 championship qualifying tournament.

"Specifically, the FFA Board found that the players engaged in unprofessional conduct," the FFA said. "The matter came to the attention of FFA in April, 2019 following a complaint by a woman." It was unclear what the nature of the complaint was. State broadcaster ABC reported the complaint had been made earlier in the year to government funding agency Sport Australia. The FFA said it had launched an investigation shortly after receiving the complaint but that it had taken months to complete due to its "complexity".

The players were due to travel to China on Nov. 9 to prepare for the AFC U-23 championship in January but were held back pending the sanction. They have recourse to appeal the decision to an independent committee, the FFA said.

"These sanctions are commensurate to the nature of the breaches," FFA Chairman Chris Nikou said. "Upholding our commitment to respect and responsibility cannot be compromised. "The players have understood the gravity of their actions and have positively commenced respectful relationship programs that will ensure they appreciate these values in the future." —Reuters



## Sports

# Italy crush Armenia 9-1 in finale to perfect Euro 2020 qualifying

## ‘We have six months to prepare for European Championship’

**PALERMO:** Ciro Immobile and Nicolò Zaniolo scored a brace each as Italy wrapped up their perfect Euro 2020 qualifying campaign with a crushing 9-1 win over Armenia in Palermo on Monday.

Already-qualified Italy registered an 11th straight win under coach Roberto Mancini, as the four-time world champions showed they were back on track after failing to qualify for last year's World Cup for the first time since 1958. Mancini's side have won all 10 of their Group J matches and are assured of a seeding in the Euro 2020 draw on November 30 in Bucharest. "Let's enjoy these 10 games won, it had never happened and it's an extraordinary thing," said 54-year-old Mancini.

"We had the right approach to the game and you don't score nine goals by chance. "We have six months to prepare for the European Championship, we need to improve a few things, then the difficulty will be to leave some players at home, they all deserve to be there.

"They are all young lads who are improving game after game, it just takes time. Every player gave everything they had, I had the answers I wanted from them."

Immobile, 29, started the goal-spree on eight minutes in Sicily, adding a second in the 33rd minute.

Roma midfielder Zaniolo, 20, scored his first goal for the national side on nine minutes, completing a brace on 64 minutes. Nicolò Barella, 22, also scored in the first half on front of a crowd of nearly 28,000 on the Mediterranean island. Alessio Romagnoli, Jorginho's 75th-minute penalty, and goals from Riccardo Orsolini and Federico Chiesa concluded the hammering.

Edgar Babayan pulled a goal back for Armenia 10 min-

utes from time in a rout which could have been heavier with the Azzurri rattling the woodwork on multiple occasions. "We have beaten several records but we know that June next year is the only thing that counts," said captain Leonardo Bonucci.

"Honestly, I have never had so much fun with the national team, we dominated every game." "We are aware of our strengths, we have the right mentality and a very good, united group," said Immobile. "There are all the ingredients to do well but we have to keep our feet firm on the ground and continue to work hard."

Zaniolo added: "I've made another dream come true tonight, but I realise it must be just the beginning..."

"A call-up for Euro 2020 is another dream and I hope to make that come true as well."

This was not quite either Italy's biggest international score or their largest margin of victory. They beat Egypt 11-3 in the bronze-medal match at the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam and the USA 9-0 at Brentford in the first round at the 1948 Olympics. In 1920, they beat France 9-4 in a friendly.

Italian football federation president Gabriele Gravina hailed Mancini from reviving enthusiasm in the Azzurri after the low of their World Cup qualifying disaster.

Italy will target their second European title after 1968 next year, with the opening game of the tournament in Rome. "We rounded off an extraordinary journey this evening," said Gravina. "It's a special vintage, a 2019 to frame. This is a team that has shown its true value, launching many young players. "Mancini has put Italy back on the path of success." —AFP



**PALERMO:** Italy's defender Alessio Romagnoli (2ndR Rear) scores his team's 6th goal during the Euro 2020 1st round Group J qualifying football match Italy v Armenia at the Renzo-Barbera stadium in Palermo. — AFP

## Man City's revenue rises to £535 million

**LONDON:** Manchester City's on-field success saw the club's revenues swell to £535 million (\$692 million) last season as the Premier League champions posted a profit for the fifth straight year.

A 20 percent surge in broadcast revenue saw City's income rise from £500.5 million in the 2017/18 season. Pep Guardiola's men completed an unprecedented quadruple of England's domestic trophies by winning the Premier League, FA Cup, League Cup and Community Shield.

The sale of a host of players unable to break into the first team helped boost profits to £10.1 million. Prior to Sheikh Mansour's takeover of City in 2008,

the club's revenue was a mere £87 million.

Huge losses of over £584 million followed during the first six years of their ownership due to massive investment in the playing squad and facilities, including the £200 million Etihad Campus training ground.

However, a boom in commercial and broadcast revenue brought about by continued qualification for the Champions League and four Premier League titles in the past eight seasons has seen City post a profit in each of the past five years.

"As intended by His Highness Sheikh Mansour, our organisation is now at a level of maturity that enables us to plan on multi-year cycles both in terms of our management of squads and more widely across the business," City chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak said in a statement.

"This strategic planning has allowed us to create an environment in which continued on-pitch success

is both possible and likely, and financial sustainability is a reality."

City's income is still dwarfed by local rivals Manchester United's £627 million revenue for the 2018/19 season. However, the gap between the two will be significantly closer this season with United expecting their income to fall to between £560-580 million due to a lack of Champions League football.

City's figures for this season will also be bolstered by a club record kit deal with Puma worth a reported £65 million a season over the next 10 years. However, the club are still under scrutiny due to an investigation from UEFA into alleged breaches of financial fair play (FFP). The investigation into City is based on leaked emails published last year by German magazine Der Spiegel that City flouted FFP regulations by inflating the value of sponsorship deals. Possible punishments include a ban from the Champions League, a transfer ban or a fine. — AFP

## Wales target Euro 2020 spot as Ireland forced to settle for play-offs

**PARIS:** Wales are hoping to snatch the final automatic qualifying berth for Euro 2020 as they take on Hungary, after the Republic of Ireland were left to settle for a crack at reaching the finals via the play-offs.

Ryan Giggs's Wales side, who have already qualified for the play-offs should things not go their way, face Hungary in Cardiff knowing a victory will guarantee them a place at next year's 24-team tournament and a chance to repeat their fairytale run to the semi-finals in France in 2016.

Despite the presence of Gareth Bale and Aaron Ramsey in their ranks, Wales have not often convinced in this qualifying campaign but a 2-0 victory away in Azerbaijan on Saturday set up this winner-takes-all showdown.

"We have got that momentum. I think we'll have to be better than we were the other night if we are going to win," warned Giggs. "But I believe in the players. I believe in the group that we've got and the qualities they possess."

Wales are currently third in Group E, a point behind second-placed Hungary, while 2018 World Cup runners-up Croatia have already secured top spot. It is not quite a straight shoot-out between today's opponents in Cardiff though — if the game ends in a draw, Slovakia can leapfrog them both by defeating Azerbaijan.

For whoever misses out on automatic qualification, there will however be a second chance to qualify via the play-offs. That is the path Ireland will have to take if they are to reach the finals after a 1-1 draw with Denmark in Dublin on Monday saw them finish third in Group D behind Switzerland and the Danes.

"Overall I'm very pleased with the performance and very proud of the players, particularly after conceding, to push them right to the limit," Ireland manager Mick McCarthy told Sky Sports after the game. "Play like that in the play-offs and we can beat anybody." Nineteen of the 20 automatic qualifying berths for the Euros have now been allocated.

The remaining four spots will go to the winners of the play-offs which will take place in March — the draw for those ties will be on Friday at 1100 GMT. The draw for the final tournament will take place in Bucharest on Saturday, November 30.

The seemingly highly confusing play-off format is based on the final standings in the inaugural UEFA Nations League, which split European nations into four divisions and offered teams from each tier a second chance to qualify for the Euros.

Georgia, Belarus, North Macedonia and Kosovo will meet in the play-offs in the bottom tier League D, with the winner after two semi-finals and a one-off final advancing to a first ever major tournament.

Scotland — who finish their disappointing qualifying campaign against Kazakhstan on Tuesday — already know they will have a home play-off on March 26. If they win that, Steve Clarke's team will advance to a final against either Norway or Serbia for the chance to reach a first tournament since the 1998 World Cup.

Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will only get an idea who they might face in the play-offs after today's games. As for the draw for the finals themselves, England already know they will be in the first pot of seeds alongside the likes of Italy, Belgium and Spain, who have just reappointed Luis Enrique as coach.

However, France and Germany could yet both end up in the second pot of seeds for a competition to be staged in 12 cities across 12 different nations between June 12 and July 12 next year, with the semi-finals and final at Wembley. — AFP

## Henry ready for Montreal challenge

**MONTREAL:** Newly-appointed Montreal Impact boss Thierry Henry vowed to learn from the mistakes of his disastrous reign at Monaco on Monday but called for patience as he attempts to revive the fortunes of the struggling Major League Soccer outfit.

Speaking at his first press conference since his appointment by Montreal last week, the 42-year-old former France and Arsenal superstar insisted he was ready for the challenge despite his troubled tenure with Ligue 1 side Monaco.

Henry was sacked by Monaco in January after only 100 days in charge as the team nosedived into the relegation zone following his appointment, with just five wins in 20 matches. "For me, the way I put it is always [either] you win or you learn, and I learned a lot there," Henry said of his spell at Monaco.

"It's about coming back, always. You have to get up and be in front of what happens. The only mistake that you can make is not learning from what happened."

Henry, who was also an assistant coach to Belgium during the country's 2018 World Cup campaign, where they finished third, said his experiences were part of his evolution as a manager.

"You have to start somewhere," he said of his time with Belgium and Monaco. "I learned a lot about myself. It's about fighting. This isn't just my story but the story of everyone in life. Everyone falls. It's about how you get up."

The Impact's sporting director Olivier Renard said Henry beat out several candidates under consideration for the Montreal position. After meeting Henry in mid-October, it was decided then that he should take on the job of rebuilding the foundering franchise, he said.

"In terms of a shared vision of the sport, we immediately clicked," Renard said. "I wanted someone motivated, who loves the city, who wanted to come and who advocates an offensive game."

Henry, who spent four years in MLS with the New York Red Bulls at the tailend of his playing career, meanwhile urged Montreal's fans to be patient, saying success won't come overnight for the team, after missing the playoffs the last three years.

"We have a fresh start and we're going to move forward to rebuild the team," Henry told reporters. "We know the direction we want to go, but you can't build a new team in two months, or three months or even a year," he said. "We have a lot of hard work ahead of us, and it will require patience."

"We also need to win back the support of fans. I think this is very important because fans and the city, the community need to feel a connection to the team. It's up to us to bring them back on our side."

Henry signed a two-year deal with the Impact, with an option for 2022, becoming its seventh coach in just eight years. In Montreal, he reunites with his former France teammate Bacary Sagna and former Barcelona teammate Bojan Krkic, as well as French defender Rod Fanni.

He said he first visited the Canadian metropolis with the Red Bulls in 2011, and "fell in love with this city." "If you take the best of Europe and the best of North American you get Montreal," he said.—AFP



**TEL AVIV:** Argentina's forward Lionel Messi fights for the ball with Uruguay's defender Diego Godin during the friendly football match between Argentina and Uruguay at the Bloomfield stadium in the Israeli coastal city of Tel Aviv. —AFP

## Israel sees Messi visit as victory, even as Argentina-Uruguay draw

**TEL AVIV:** Lionel Messi scored a late penalty as Argentina drew 2-2 with Uruguay in a friendly held in Israel Monday, with the Jewish state considering the match a victory. The game pitted Messi against his Barcelona teammate Luis Suarez, and it looked as though the Uruguayan had gotten the better of him as he scored one goal and set up another to give his team a 2-1 lead going into injury time.

But a ball into the box was handled by a Uruguayan defender, and Messi calmly slotted the resulting penalty home to ensure an engaging friendly ended all square.

The 32-year-old had earlier teed up Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero to make it 1-1, after Edinson Cavani had opened the scoring.

Suarez scored a free-kick from outside the box to give his side the lead before Messi's late intervention. The game had been dubbed by organisers as an important moment for Israel, following the cancellation of another Argentina match a year earlier after pressure from pro-Palestinian campaigners.

Organisers dubbed it as a game about peace, but boycott campaigners called for it to be cancelled over Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. It was not immune from politics — halfway through the first half the United States announced it no longer considered Israeli settlements in the West Bank illegal, a move condemned by the Palestinian leadership. In the build-up to the game Uruguay coach Oscar Tabarez said he

had been "very worried" about the game after a flare up between Israel and militant groups in neighbouring Gaza last week. Sylvan Adams, an Israeli-Canadian businessman whose financial backing ensured the match was held in Israel, said he hoped to show another side of the Jewish state.

"In bringing perhaps the world's most famous athlete, Lionel Messi, to Israel, we are providing excitement for the entire country — for Muslim, Christian and Jewish citizens of Israel," he said in a statement to AFP.

"This is the 'normal' Israel that I know and love." On the pitch at times it felt like the Messi show, with the crowd chanting his name and every mazy run greeted by vociferous cheering.

While not at his electric best, he showed moments of quality — slaloming past defenders and forcing Uruguay goalkeeper Martin Campana into a number of smart saves. The match comes after the cancellation of a pre-World Cup friendly fixture between Argentina and Israel in June 2018 after boycott calls. That match had been due to be played in Jerusalem, sparking Palestinian anger and criticism of Argentina online. Israel considers Jerusalem its "indivisible" capital, while Palestinians claim the eastern part of the city — occupied by Israel in 1967 and later annexed — as the capital of their future state.

Monday's game was held in the Israeli commercial capital Tel Aviv. Messi has now scored in both games since a three-month international suspension for comments he made after Argentina were eliminated from the Copa America in July.

He accused CONMEBOL, the governing body of South American football, of corruption and fixing the tournament for hosts and eventual winners Brazil. He returned to the national team on Friday, scoring the winning goal in a 1-0 victory over Brazil. — AFP



**25** Raanta's first shutout of the season as Coyotes blank Kings



**26** Russia beat reigning champions Croatia in Davis Cup opener



**27** Italy crush Armenia 9-1 in finale to perfect Euro 2020 qualifying



## Doncic scores 42 in triple-double

### Holiday brothers lead Pacers to rout over Nets



DALLAS: Luka Doncic #77 of the Dallas Mavericks and Dejounte Murray #5 of the San Antonio Spurs at American Airlines Center in Dallas, Texas. — AFP

**DALLAS:** Luka Doncic poured in a career-high 42 points, grabbed 11 rebounds and recorded 12 assists to lead the Dallas Mavericks to a 117-110 win over the visiting San Antonio Spurs on Monday for their second straight victory. The triple-double was Doncic's league-leading sixth of the season. Finney-Smith had 22 points for Dallas, Kristaps Porzingis added 18 points and 10 rebounds, and Jalen Brunson scored 11 points in the win. It was the first time the Mavericks scored 110 or more points against San Antonio since January 2010. DeMar DeRozan scored a season-high 36 points for the reeling Spurs, who lost their sixth straight game. San Antonio hadn't lost that many in a row since the 2010-11 season, when it dropped six straight in March and April. The Spurs went on to finish that regular season with 61 wins.

#### PACERS 115, NETS 86

Aaron Holiday scored a career-high 24 points, and brother Justin Holiday added a season-high 20 points as Indiana shook off a sluggish start and continued its success over the Brooklyn with a victory in New York. The Pacers beat the Nets for the second time this season, 11th time in 12 meetings and sixth straight time in Brooklyn. Aaron Holiday added a career-high 13 assists. T.J. Warren had 19 points while Domantas Sabonis collected 16 points and a career-high 18 rebounds. The Nets lost for the fourth time in five games and were blown out in their second game without Kyrie Irving (right shoulder impingement). Irving was listed as questionable for the game but was ruled out Monday afternoon. Spencer Dinwiddie started for Irving and scored 28 points.

#### CLIPPERS 90, THUNDER 88

Paul George's 3-pointer with 25.9 seconds remaining was the difference, and Los Angeles held off visiting Oklahoma City. Montrezl Harrell had 28 points and 12 rebounds for the Clippers. George, who scored 70 total points in his previous two games, finished with 18 points against his former club. Clippers star Kawhi Leonard missed his third consecutive game due to a left knee contusion. Chris Paul scored 22 points and recorded four steals, and Danilo Gallinari had 14

points for the Thunder. However, Gallinari missed a potential game-winning shot near the end.

#### ROCKETS 132, TRAIL BLAZERS 108

James Harden and Russell Westbrook combined 64 points as host Houston won the battle of the backcourts, defeating Portland. While Harden scored 23 of his 36 points in the first half, Westbrook came alive in the second half with 15 of his 28 points. Westbrook added 13 rebounds and 10 assists overall as Houston extended its winning streak to eight games. The Rockets were bolstered by the return of center Clint Capela (22 points, 20 rebounds) from a concussion and Daniel House Jr. (11 points) from a sore back. Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum, the Trail Blazers' high-scoring guard tandem, totaled 38 points on 14-of-34 shooting. McCollum had 25 points while Lillard had 13, shooting just 4 of 15 overall and 1 of 6 from 3-point range.

#### CELTICS 99, SUNS 85

Jayson Tatum scored 14 of his season-high 26 points in the third quarter and added a season-high 11 rebounds, and Boston downed host Phoenix to get back on the winning track. Kemba Walker produced 19 points for Boston, and Marcus Smart had 17 points before leaving in the fourth quarter with an ankle sprain. Daniel Theis grabbed a season-high 11 rebounds for the Celtics, who had a 10-game winning streak broken in a one-point loss at Sacramento on Sunday. Devin Booker had 20 points, Kelly Oubre Jr. had 15 points, and Dario Saric had nine points and 10 rebounds for the Suns. Phoenix played without point guard Ricky Rubio (back spasms) in posting a season low in points after winning five of its previous seven games.

#### BUCKS 115, BULLS 101

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 33 points and grabbed 10 rebounds, and Milwaukee finished closed the game on a 17-2 run to wipe out a 99-98 deficit and beat host Chicago. Brook Lopez had 19 points and 10 rebounds to go with five blocked shots for Milwaukee, which won its fourth game in a row. George Hill scored 18, and Donte DiVincenzo finished with

15. Rookie Daniel Gafford amassed 21 points on 10-of-12 shooting for the Bulls. The second-round draft pick from Arkansas entered the game with zero points in four games off the bench.

#### TIMBERWOLVES 112, JAZZ 102

Karl-Anthony Towns matched his career high of seven 3-pointers and contributed 29 points and 13 rebounds to lead Minnesota over Utah in Salt Lake City. Jeff Teague recorded 21 points and 11 assists for Minnesota, which halted a two-game slide. Robert Covington scored 15 points, Kelan Martin added 14 on 6-of-7 shooting and Josh Okogie had 11 for the Timberwolves. Bojan Bogdanovic scored 18 points but Donovan Mitchell struggled with 5-of-23 shooting while scoring 17 points for Utah, which dropped to 6-1 at home. Rudy Gobert registered 16 points and 14 rebounds.

#### RAPTORS 132, HORNETS 96

OG Anunoby scored a career-best 24 points, and Toronto demolished visiting Charlotte for its biggest margin of victory of the season. Pascal Siakam scored 20 points and Norman Powell contributed 17 for the Raptors, who were returning home after a 3-2 road trip. Terence Davis chipped in with 16 off the Toronto bench as the Raptors improved to 5-0 at home. Marvin Williams led four other teammates in double figures by scoring 14 for the Hornets, who had won two in a row.

#### KNICKS 123, CAVALIERS 105

Julius Randle scored 13 of his game-high 30 points during a pivotal first-quarter run for host Knicks, who never trailed in a blowout win over Cleveland. The Knicks are 2-2 since a 108-87 home loss to the Cavaliers on Nov. 10, when team president Steve Mills and general manager Scott Perry held a postgame press conference to express their unhappiness with New York's performance. Randle's 30-point effort was the first by a Knicks player since April 7. The Cavaliers have dropped four straight since routing the Knicks, including the last three by a combined 48 points. Kevin Porter Jr. led Cleveland with 18 points. — Reuters

over Romania on Monday, and there have been reports that he has fallen out with Luis Enrique and will not return as his assistant.

"Luis Enrique's decisions regarding his staff, as well as Robert's decision not to continue when he found out Luis Enrique wanted to return, are personal things. You have to ask them," added Rubiales.

"On Monday, Robert sent us a message saying he wanted to leave so as not to hinder the return of Luis Enrique." Rubiales confirmed that the 49-year-old Luis Enrique, the former Barcelona coach, has a contract until after the Qatar 2022 World Cup, and will stay on regardless of the team's performance at Euro 2020. — Reuters

## NZ team under fire for off-court incidents

**WELLINGTON:** The CEO and part-owner of the New Zealand Breakers apologised to fans yesterday after the struggling pro basketball team were rocked by off-court incidents this week.

The Breakers, four-times champions in Australia's National Basketball League (NBL), stood down shooting guard Glen Rice Junior on Monday after the American was charged with assault less than two weeks after arriving as a replacement player.

Hours after Rice Jr's indefinite suspension, New Zealand media reported that police met Breakers forward Tom Vodanovich at Auckland airport following a report of disorderly behaviour on the flight home from a game in Perth on Sunday.

Breakers boss Matt Walsh, whose leadership has been under heavy scrutiny after his recent clash with NBL officialdom, said the buck stopped with him. "If there are Breakers fans out there that are hurting, I take responsibility for this," he told Sky Sports News.

"If they need an apology from me, I'm sorry it didn't work out with Glen. I'm sorry that we've had these issues but I fully believe in what we're doing and we're going to get there. "We're going to get there, I promise, we're going to start winning some games and order will be restored," added Walsh, whose team have lost seven of their opening nine games.

Rice Jr, the son of three-times NBA All Star Glen Rice, was arrested and charged with assault following an incident at an Auckland nightclub last Thursday and faces a court appearance today. After initially backing him as "innocent until proven guilty", Walsh said on Monday that new information had come to light that required the 28-year-old former Georgia Tech basketball be removed from the team.

"Regardless of the outcome of Glen's court appearance, there is no denying he has let down the club, our fans and the New Zealand public after we gave him this lifeline," he said in a statement. Walsh also confirmed New Zealand international Vodanovich was intoxicated on the plane home after mixing sleeping medication with alcohol.

He was not charged by police but issued a public apology. "I am mortified to have embarrassed the club and myself on the flight," Vodanovich, who said he could not remember the flight, said in a Breakers statement. — Reuters

## Luis Enrique returns as Spain coach after daughter's death

**MADRID:** Luis Enrique has been reappointed Spain coach, having resigned from the role in June as his late daughter battled cancer, Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) President Luis Rubiales said yesterday.